From Aesthetics to Politics in the Dreyfus Affair

Roderick Cooke

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Gaduate School of Arts and Sciences

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

2014

ABSTRACT

From Aesthetics to Politics in the Dreyfus Affair

Roderick Cooke

This dissertation proposes a new interpretation for the political engagement of French writers in the Dreyfus Affair between 1897 and 1900. I argue that aesthetics has been undervalued by past scholarship on this question, and analyze the engagement of four very different writers - Emile Zola, Ferdinand Brunetière, Henry Céard and Saint-Georges de Bouhélier - demonstrating that, in each case, their prior aesthetic thought was a vital part of their political discourse on the Affair. This claim involves a rethinking of the relationship between aesthetics and politics as it has usually been conceived, with the aesthetic no longer a reflection of the political, but rather a potential source for it.

For each of the writers studied, his literary criticism and theory (dating as far back as the 1860s) are put in dialogue with his writing about the Dreyfus Affair itself through close readings of both corpuses. In each case, attention is paid to the continuities and inversions of central ideas such as individualism, truth, and the Republic, in order to illustrate their structural role in the intellectual world of the fin de siècle. As a result, I have termed the four chapters 'micro-histories of ideas' to convey the way in which individual concerns provide a window onto the major battles of ideas in the France of the early Third Republic.

The Introduction both presents the four authors and discusses past theoretical work in the field of aesthetics and politics, highlighting differences from the approach used here.

Chapter 1 is devoted to Emile Zola, the inventor of the term 'naturalism' in literature and its foremost exponent. I argue that Zola's apparently intuitive appeals to truth and justice in the miscarriage of justice that affected Alfred Dreyfus were in fact drawn from his fiction, and beyond that from a commitment to truth in the literary domain that stretched over the previous thirty years of his career.

In Chapter 2, Zola's critical adversary, Ferdinand Brunetière, is examined. I show that Brunetière's famous attack on individualism and the intellectuals during the Affair has its origins in his opposition to Zola's naturalist project many years earlier. In both cases, the divisiveness of Zola's actions - whether in the novel or in his pro-Dreyfus articles - was a threat to the harmonious solidarity theorized by Brunetière in both the literary and political spheres.

Henry Céard, a former Zola disciple turned nationalist journalist, occupies Chapter 3. Céard's commentary on the Dreyfus Affair is almost entirely targeted at Zola, and relies on a panoply of literary techniques, so much so that Céard seemed to see the Affair as a text to be elucidated. Through his attempts to do so, we can observe the realigning of the French political right through the eyes of a mid-ranking commentator who was particularly adept at addressing his audience.

Chapter 4 discusses the case of Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, leader of a poetic movement called *naturisme*. De Bouhélier became a Dreyfusard despite ideological leanings - anti-Semitism, militarism, revanchism - that predisposed him to the opposite camp. I argue that it is only an examination of his poetic thought that can explain his Dreyfusard engagement. This entails a greater revision of the traditional 'human rights vs. *raison d'état*' divide invoked in studies of the Affair than has previously been advanced.

The Conclusion ends by considering the applicability of these findings to other historical moments, paying particular attention to the Algerian independence crisis as a time in which there was a conscious attempt to repeat elements of the Dreyfus Affair, and in which aesthetics and politics were once more intertwined.

Contents

Introduction

"*C'est un problème d'esthétique que ni l'accusation ni la défense n'ont cherché à résoudre.*"
-Henry Céard, February 1898

The importance of writers in contributing to the development and resolution of the Dreyfus Affair has been acknowledged since its beginning. Without the often rancorous involvement of authors on both sides of the controversy, the case of a Jewish army captain falsely convicted of treason could never have split France in two and threatened its continued existence as a republic the way it did between 1897 and 1899. While Emile Zola's epochal text 'J'Accuse...!' has received the most significant attention, other authors on both sides of the conflict have been studied both individually and collectively. This is true of novelists like Zola, poets like Paul Valéry, or critics like Zola's implacable opponent Ferdinand Brunetière.[1]

Yet what past analyses of all these writers, no matter their allegiance or preferred genre, have shared is a strange disinterest in their writing itself. That is to say that the engagement of men and women of letters in the Affair that turned France into a maelstrom of ideological struggle has been studied largely without reference to the writing from which they lived and made their names. The major exception to this trend has been those studies examining the fictionalization of the Affair after its end (or, in a few cases, during its course): these studies tread very different territory, looking at the afterlife of the crisis where I will be examining its prehistory. [2]

[1] Valéry, in a shock to many of his readers, has been revealed in recent years as a committed anti-Dreyfusard.
[2] Most recently, Evlyn Gould's *The Dreyfus Affair and the Literature of the Third Republic* (McFarland, 2012) discusses fictional responses by authors including Zola and Maurice Barrès to the events and themes of the Affair.

It is this absence of literature that I've sought to remedy in the present work. Before describing how I've aimed to do so, one must ponder the question of why it was *necessary* to do so. Why the scant attention paid to writing and textuality in analyzing the Affair? One reason may be that the immense scope and continued resonance of Alfred Dreyfus' case, and everything it set in motion, seems to set it apart from the realm of literature. Zola may have begun his very first article about the Affair by exclaiming "Quel drame poignant, et quels personnages superbes!"[3], but the weight of the events he went on to describe sets it apart from the narratives of his earlier *Rougon-Macquart* novels.

Another factor in the marginalization of writing is the nature of the approaches past scholars have used. Pierre Bourdieu's influence is strongly imprinted on the historiography of the Dreyfus Affair. Both Christophe Charle's now-classic text *La Naissance des Intellectuels* (from 1990, and which will be a frequent point of reference in the coming chapters), and, much more recently, Gisèle Sapiro's *La Responsabilité de l'Ecrivain* (2011) draw deeply on Bourdieu's theoretical developments for their framework. Chief among those developments is the notion of field: in this case, following Bourdieu's own *Les Règles de l'Art*, the literary field.

A disclaimer is in order: the fact that I am contending that Bourdieusian approaches minimize the importance of text and aesthetics in the Dreyfus Affair does not mean that I in turn minimize their importance to its analysis. Charle's work, in particular, is surely the single most significant contribution to the study of the crisis and its impact on intellectual life in France. Nevertheless, no study can adequately cover every dimension of such a complex and multifarious moment in history. Treating authors as points on a graph, demonstrating the near-deterministic relationship between literary associations or academic specialty and the choice of a

[3] Emile Zola, *La Vérité en Marche* (Paris: Charpentier, 1901), p. 3.

side in the Affair, runs the risk of implying that aesthetics and the nuances of individual ideology counted for nothing in the decisions made by those concerned.

Among other recent studies of the polemic that pay interested but ultimately shallow attention to writing must be mentioned Ruth Harris' *Dreyfus* (2010). Harris' primary focus is not writers per se but individuals both scholarly and political, and the passions that drove them to choose both allies and enemies. A central claim in the work is that the two sides shared more than they differed, and that emotion is a necessary category to explain the deep divides that nonetheless arose from 1897 on. As a result, her discussion of figures like Brunetière or Maurice Barrès can move too quickly to establish a kinship between some of their ideas and those espoused by their opponents.

I will, at various points, argue the opposite: that the roots of many choices made during the Affair were in place long before the eventual participants had ever heard of a Jewish officer and his treason case, and that those roots were frequently aesthetic and originally had no overt connection to politics at all. In other words, for all the passions that undeniably accompanied them, Dreyfus Affair engagements were idea-driven; what Harris explains through the Freudian "narcissism of marginal difference" was in fact a set of highly personal intellectual congeries. The reason that so many surprising choices were made at the time is that the complex nature of the worldviews involved allowed them to be adapted into a political discourse backing either Dreyfus or his opponents.

In the past few years I've had many occasions to tell others, both within French departments and elsewhere, what I work on. The responses have often veered to one of two extremes: either (and both positions have been expressed both more and less eloquently than

what follows) "well, of course their ideas about literature and politics were the same" or "what does aesthetics have to do with a political crisis like Dreyfus?" The task, then, as I see it is to counter both these replies through the analysis.

On the one hand, the unexpected nature of the precise decisions taken and thoughts thought by people like Brunetière, Zola, Henry Céard and Saint-Georges de Bouhélier must be underlined. The tensions within each man's worldview, and the way that the conditions of the Affair interacted with those tensions, are a fundamental part of this study. It was not obvious that aesthetics would be shifted into politics, and they often had to undergo many mutations in order to do so. On the other hand, demonstrating that, say, Charle's broad-focus approach to the Affair does not suffice in capturing all its characteristics is equally vital. I will contend that we cannot fully understand either the Dreyfus Affair itself, or the French fin-de-siècle literary environment, without micro-historical attention to the ambivalent relationship between aesthetics and politics.

This project originally arose from a desire to examine Ferdinand Brunetière's critiques of Zola's novels. To those interested in naturalism Brunetière can seem a sort of Dr. Moriarty in Zola's literary career; rarely glimpsed in direct confrontations, but continually lurking inimically in the background and undoubtedly a foe of sufficient stature to be a match for, if not a conqueror of, 'our' man.[4] The fact that Brunetière, who ran the influential journal *La Revue des Deux Mondes* for over two decades and used it to praise and blame almost every author of note in the period, is a source of so many pithy putdowns when his subject-matter is Zola makes reading his criticism in detail almost counter-intuitive, and I fell into that trap for many years. Why read the full articles when they seem so one-note?

[4] For all his habitual pugnacity in responding to attacks, Zola appears to have avoided commenting on Brunetière's barbs almost entirely: all the more remarkable since the critic's first and last negative reviews of Zola novels (*La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret* and *Paris* respectively) are separated by a full 23 years.

The complete answer to this question will be provided in the chapter devoted to Brunetière, but what quickly emerged from a belated engagement with his criticism was the paradoxical nature of his views on naturalism. From their unexpected complexity came the realization that it has often been remarked in passing that Zola and his loudest critic were opponents over both naturalist novels and Alfred Dreyfus, but that any substantive link between the two polemics had not been drawn. The question of whether it was more than coincidence that two major figures opposed each other implacably over two very different subjects, many years apart, was still unresolved.

What made it a particularly thorny one to answer was the precision required in doing so. Linking aesthetics and politics is in itself neither new nor particularly controversial; Jacques Rancière is surely the most prominent current thinker to do so, and the 19th century has received considerable attention in this domain.[5] But when 'aesthetics and politics' is discussed, it is usually through the prism of fiction or verse, depending on the authors involved. Rancière, for instance, discusses Flaubert's novels as symptomatic of a new democratization of literary language, one that allowed the voices of lower or marginal social actors to penetrate the sphere of literature.

To explain the connections between what I'll call the quarrel of naturalism and the polemic over Dreyfus, a more ascetic approach would be needed. Because the Affair was not fictionalized until after the fact, and writers instead took to the press to comment on and attempt to influence its course, the complementary corpus for naturalism would have to be critical and

[5] Notably in Rancière's *Politique de la Littérature* (Paris: Galilée, 2007), which features chapters on Flaubert, Mallarmé and Tolstoy among others.

not fictional. In other words, I would be looking at Zola's volume *Le Roman Experimental* and not, say, *Nana*, which was published in the same year (1880).[6]

Zola and Brunetière would not suffice to explain the issue, but they had helped lay down the framework by which to involve other authors. Because they remained on the 'pro' and 'anti' sides of naturalism and Dreyfusism, the most valuable figures would be ones whose choices were more liminal, thereby revealing just what the dividing lines were in the two controversies. Henry Céard then became a natural chapter subject. For all his modern obscurity, Céard had been a vital contributor to Zola's *Rougon-Macquart* project (written between 1870 and 1893), a source of vital documents and friendly criticism. He had been one of the 'petits naturalistes' that Brunetière scornfully dismissed for riding Zola's coattails.[7]

But, more importantly, he had turned his back on Zola in the 1890s, and taken a conservative turn in his politics: he was also a prolific journalist. As a result, when Zola began pleading the Dreyfusard case in *Le Figaro* at the end of 1897, Céard was in a truly unique position, with the motive, means and opportunity to strike back at his former mentor and attempt to undermine his efforts. The literary categories and techniques Céard would use in this campaign clearly underline the importance of aesthetics in discussing how the Dreyfus Affair affected the literary field.

If perfect symmetry were being sought the closest thing to a mirror image of Céard would probably be Anatole France. France had repeatedly criticized Zola's output in the 1880s and, despite some mollification in the years preceding the Affair, was never an admirer or kindred

[6] Also appearing that year: the collective work *Les Soirées de Médan*, containing short stories about the Franco-Prussian War by Zola and five younger naturalist protégés. The two who've survived to posterity are Guy de Maupassant and J.-K. Huysmans, but this dissertation will focus on Henry Céard, another of their number.
[7] Brunetière, 'Les Petits Naturalistes'. *La Revue des Deux Mondes* (August 1st 1884).

spirit. Yet France would become the only member of the 40-man Académie Française to publicly support Dreyfus' cause, ranking directly behind Zola as the chief literary member of the Dreyfusard coalition. The reason France does not figure more saliently here is that his actual writings on the Affair were primarily of the sort evoked above, allegories after the fact. The two novels of his that retold the events in question most clearly were *Monsieur Bergeret à Paris* (1901) and *L'Ile des Pingouins* (1908). During the crisis France's role was more symbolic, as he lent his name to petitions and brought the status of the Academy into play. This makes him less-suited to an analysis of how aesthetics and politics were discursively related.

The same is not true of Saint-Georges de Bouhélier. Like Céard, Bouhélier is today all but forgotten. But unlike Céard, who was always relatively obscure even at the time (only publishing two novels in all), Bouhélier attracted a great deal of attention in the 1890s, leading a briefly-flourishing poetic movement and publishing its manifesto in *Le Figaro.* In the context of the present work he does not, on the surface, seem illuminating in the way Céard does: his aesthetics were heavily influenced by Zola's, to the extent that he baptized his movement 'naturisme' in a clear calque on 'naturalisme', and he chose the Dreyfusard side just as Zola did, and as a result of personal conversations with his elder.

Yet the last chapter of this dissertation will argue that, despite such overt coherences, Bouhélier's opting for Dreyfusism was a paradoxical choice, and in having to justify that choice polemically he revealed political dimensions of his literary thought that his writings about literature alone had not. That is to say that many of the terms and symbols used by Bouhélier to champion a new poetics, one intended to replace symbolism, actually found their clearest definition in the repurposing they received during the Dreyfus Affair. Because Bouhélier was, in

his own words, "raciste au fond de l'âme"[8] and had to write around that prejudice to articulate a Dreyfusism he believed in, his intellectual convictions would be outlined with greater clarity (and their further biases laid bare) by the pressure of the moment.

The approach used in examining these four authors' cases is primarily textual, relying on close readings of both their literary criticism and their polemical articles and pamphlets. My conviction from the outset was that the analysis needed to be bottom-up rather than top-down. Rather than imposing a theoretical matrix on these corpuses, I would start with the material and work up to a global understanding. The allusive nature of these writings, born of the pervasive literary culture in which their authors were operating, means that allowing the texts to guide interpretation is essential, and close reading allows this like no other method.

Several objections could be raised here. One is that *explication de texte* is an 'old-fashioned' method, almost as old, in its systematized form, as the Dreyfus Affair itself.[9] Given the profusion of theoretical approaches to literature in the last 50 years, why restrict oneself to the old ways? The glib answer is that the truth never goes out of fashion. More seriously, any theory is a means and not an end, and the end being sought here is ill-matched with the reductive nature of high theory. The limits of the Bourdieusian method were clear from the outset and underlined the broader need for a radically different methodology.

Yet what of other theory, such as Rancière's? His work has done more, in the last twenty years or so, to popularize the interrelationship of aesthetics and politics than anyone else's. The reason his ideas do not feature more heavily in these pages is that Rancière's concern with

---

[8] Cited in Patrick L. Day, *Saint-Georges de Bouhélier's* Naturisme: *an Anti-Symbolist Movement in Late Nineteenth-Century French Poetry* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), p. 73.

[9] Brunetière's onetime disciple Gustave Lanson, the father of positivist literary studies in the French lycées and universities, was responsible for its imposition as the standard means of literary analysis in France.

democracy is ill-fitting in the context of the Dreyfus Affair. As much as it may make a 21st-century reader uncomfortable, the Affair was a clash of elites. No popular emancipation was in play during the time it gripped France; the socialist political groupings[10] often responded to the Affair with distrust or disdain, viewing it as a bourgeois civil war. Jean Jaurès, the socialist leader most prominent on the Dreyfusard side (notably by publishing *Les Preuves*), had to take distance from his political associates in order to do so, telling Charles Péguy "ils m'arrachent les pans de mon habit pour m'empêcher de monter à la tribune".[11]

Moreover, Rancière himself has asserted that his thought is not directed at writerly engagement, but rather at changes in the distribution of the sensible, to invoke perhaps the term most closely identified with his work. The first two sentences of his book *Politique de la Littérature* make the dissociation clear: "la politique de la littérature n'est pas la politique des écrivains. Elle ne concerne pas leurs engagements personnels dans les luttes politiques ou sociales de leur temps".[12] It is true that, in a much looser sense, the question of who has the right to speak is highly pertinent, and will set the terms of the Dreyfus Affair polemics that birthed the concept of the public intellectual in France: but this is a non-Rancièrian posing of the question. The struggle over intellectual and moral authority in the Affair was waged between the military (and politicians and thinkers sympathetic to them), and those figures such as Zola who invoked universal standards of criticism and human rights to bring justice to Dreyfus.

The theoretical tradition perhaps most closely associated with the field of aesthetics and politics is German Marxism, particularly the Frankfurt School. Within this tradition, disagreements over the relationship were both intense and varied. But whether one reads

[10] The SFIO, France's first fully-constituted socialist political party, would not be founded until 1905.
[11] Eric Cahm, *L'Affaire Dreyfus: Histoire, Politique et Société* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1994), p. 130.
[12] Rancière, *Politique de la Littérature*, p. 11.

Benjamin, Adorno or Lukacs, in each case the overriding concern is with what the correct means of representing the proletariat and class conflict in literature might be. It has often been noted, for instance, that Lukacs harshly criticized Zola's writing despite broad political sympathy between them. Yet it should also be noted that, had Zola lived to read Lukacs, the rejection would no doubt have cut both ways: Zola refused all claims by political tendencies, and socialist appeals to his allegiance in the 1870s were dismissed, as will be seen in chapter 1.

In other words, the common aesthetic assumption found in, notably, Brecht and the other theorists mentioned above – that literature exists to represent the common people – was absent from the writers studied in this dissertation. Even Zola, who will always be remembered for broadening the boundaries of speech in the novel through, most notably, the dialect work of *L'Assommoir*, did so as part of a programme of representing society in all its varieties, not in order to raise consciousness of the working class. As a result, Marxist theory is of limited use in explaining his, his allies' and opponents' positions. Whatever one's perspective on the strength of that theory in explaining literary works by authors with very different political sensibilities (Lukacs' work on Walter Scott or Benjamin's on Baudelaire, for instance), it is far harder to make the case that the aesthetic ideas *themselves* of non-Marxist authors can be accounted for by Marxist theory.

I differ from these theorists in my conception of the relationship between aesthetics and politics. For any follower of Marx, no matter which interpretation of his ideas they may follow, aesthetic ideas and experiences belong to the superstructure; they are a product of a determinate socio-economic reality through one or more mechanisms.[13] Consequently, the correct aesthetic

[13] The precise mechanism in question has often served to generate disagreements between individual Marxists; see, for instance, Adorno's criticisms of Benjamin for, as he saw it, ignoring the role of mediation in the transition from

stance for the critic or historian is the one that uses literature most accurately to uncover features of the infrastructure that can be masked by processes such as reification. Lukacs' attacks on naturalism resided largely in the fact that the descriptive focus of the Zolian novel atomized reality, diverting the reader from any possible apprehension of the dialectical processes involved in cultural production: by privileging appearance over essence, they lost artistic and also political merit.[14]

Lacking any commitment to a Marxist interpretation of social reality, I take the link between aesthetics and politics instead to be non-hierarchical. By this I mean to assert that aesthetics can be a *source* for political ideas, rather than merely a reflection of the shared realities that underlie both, or an emanation of politics. For that reason, I will term each of the chapters that follow a micro-history of ideas. This study is primarily historical, not only because it addresses a realigning moment in French history but because it is concerned with cause and effect more than with the structure of the texts it discusses. The goal throughout has been to demonstrate how aesthetic debates over the status of naturalist literature became transformed into political commentaries (pivotal ones, at least in the cases of Zola and Brunetière) on the Dreyfus Affair. As such, the tropes and themes enrolled by these writers are of vital importance, but they are milestones rather than the destination.

The particular power of close reading in this context is its ability to take individual terms, phrases and allusions and connect them to much broader debates. For instance, as will be seen in chapter 3, Céard refers to Zola as a "moine" when skewering his perspective on the Affair. Through an intertextual reading that refers back to the internecine attacks Zola had faced ten

---

economic base to aesthetic superstructure (T. Adorno, 'Letters to Walter Benjamin' in Bloch et al, *Aesthetics and Politics* [Verso, 1990], p. 129).

[14] Georg Lukacs, 'Realism in the Balance' in Bloch et al, *Aesthetics and Politics* [Verso, 1990], pp. 36-7.

years earlier from disgruntled minor naturalists, we will be able to understand this comment as both a scabrous insinuation of onanism and a charge that Zola had lost touch with literary and social reality by purchasing a summer home in Médan and spending much of the year there instead of in the Parisian social whirl. In other words, literary history matters to political history here because there was already a discourse of self-imposed benightedness surrounding Zola when he chose to weigh in on the Affair – and his opponents were primed to adapt it to the new context.

The latter example also reveals another intended feature of this approach, which is its dialectical nature: understanding 'dialectical' in a non-materialist sense. I set out to discover new material and conclusions about the Dreyfus Affair, but by approaching it from the side of literature I also intended to reveal more about the literary field in the process. In outlining the literary origins of the Affair's polemics, the political dimensions of what might have seemed to be purely scribblers' quarrels would also emerge. This will be perhaps most clearly witnessed in the chapter devoted to Brunetière. Contrary to past work on his career, I argue that Brunetière's reflections on the Affair are in tight continuity with his existing literary-critical stances, and trace the evolution of his subject-matter from the novel to politics over a 23-year period.

The crucial intermediate stage in this process is found in the late 1880s/early 1890s clashes over the bankruptcy of science. Like the Dreyfus Affair, this controversy involved many authors but also scientists and politicians, all of whose allegiances overlaid each other in a tangled web. As Brunetière led the assault against science, he sharpened the largely latent political positions of his earlier literary criticism into a weapon to be used against the champions of secularism. By understanding how he did so, we can better grasp just how criticism in the fin-

de-siècle contained more or less well-formed categories from the political realm within its discourse.

This is not to say that no evolution took place across time and genre. As these authors got older, their ideas shifted, and the shift from aesthetics to politics naturally induced alterations of its own. But even in the most extreme case discussed here, that of Céard, it will become clear that the final tenets of his thought were often inversions of those he had espoused as a young naturalist, and as such remained deeply indebted to those earlier days.

Textual analysis is well-suited to reflecting on the Affair for another reason; the authors in question tended to approach events *as* a text, and themselves used literary analysis to draw conclusions and make predictions about it. Zola, as already noted, began by viewing the principal actors as characters, not political individuals. Céard littered his articles with literary allusions, not only to the biographies of writers like Hugo and Balzac, but also to characters as diverse as Oedipus and Alceste from Molière's *Le Misanthrope*. Brunetière twinned his article on Zola's trial with a review of Zola's new novel *Paris*,[15] using the two to effect an intellectual pincer movement on the leading Dreyfusard. And Bouhélier, faced with the task of devising a Dreyfus-agnostic Dreyfusism, reached back to his poetic celebrations of the common man's lot to paint Zola as a cruelly-assailed prophet who embodied the will of ordinary Frenchmen.

A few years before the Dreyfus case became the Affair, the symbolist (and, before that, naturalist) Paul Adam, writing in the avant-garde *La Revue Blanche*, summed up the interpenetrated, analogic relationship that the aesthetic and political entertained in his and his contemporaries' thought:

[15] the two articles appeared only one month apart, at the height of Zola's involvement in the Affair.

> En effet l'engouement littéraire pour l'altruisme actif [*i.e. socialism or anarchism*] naquit d'une considération purement esthétique. L'inharmonie du monde moral choque comme une faute d'art. L'extrême quiétude de quelques obèses et la souffrance que l'on croit familière à la multitude laborieuse outragent les écrivains ainsi qu'une disproportion architecturale, une opposition fâcheuse de tonalités, une cacophonie d'orchestre.[16]

Adam was speaking of the burgeoning leftist engagements of a set of young authors, but his words have wider meaning, stressing as they do the way in which political principles were understood from an artistic grounding, and as mirrors of the ideas that guided artistic commitments.

This observation raises the question of the wider situation of writers during the Affair. I will be discussing four in detail, but almost the whole republic of letters was inexorably gripped by the crisis. Christophe Charle has studied the number of those who declared an affiliation on either side of the conflict, with particular attention to the self-chosen designation 'homme de lettres'. The moments at which this choice occurred were, on the Dreyfusard side, the signing of either the 'Manifeste des Intellectuels' of January the 14th 1898, or the 'Protestation' on behalf of Lieutenant-Colonel Picquart, when the army turned on him. For the anti-Dreyfusards, the analogue Charle uses is the Ligue de la Patrie Française membership list of early 1899. These were all key moments, whose context will be further discussed below, at which mass mobilization of intellectuals on both sides of the crisis took place.

The result of Charle's research is that 320 'hommes de lettres' or close equivalent signed a Dreyfusard petition, against 290 literary anti-Dreyfusards.[17] This is tempered by the observation

---

[16] Paul Adam, 'Critique du Socialisme et de l'Anarchie'. *La Revue Blanche* 4 no.19 (25 May 1893), p. 371.
[17] Charle, *La Naissance des 'Intellectuels'* (Paris: Minuit, 1990), p. 202.

that the majority of these figures had no publication on record, and were thus probably either aspiring writers or journalists and polemicists who preferred the greater cachet of 'homme de lettres'. Nevertheless, the numbers indicate how evenly balanced writers as a group were between the two sides.

However, that overall balance was inflected sharply at the individual level by the literary affiliation of the author. On Charle's analysis, both age and proximity to either the 'pôle dominant' (in other words, well-settled and prestigious literary movements and institutions) or the 'pôle dominé' (fledgling, avant-garde and/or ephemeral movements) determine the direction of an author's engagement - he applies the same criteria to the separate academic field, whose more clear-cut disciplines and institutions prove still more amenable to such a treatment. Thus, if one were a symbolist poet, member of a movement which defined itself by its marginality and rejection of the norm, one would very likely become a Dreyfusard. Conversely, as mentioned above, the most established and conservative literary institution, the Académie Française, only had one Dreyfusard member in the person of Anatole France.

Perhaps the most distinguished exponent of a more 'traditional' historiography of the Affair in France is Michel Winock, who has published numerous books dealing wholly or partly with the crisis.[18] Ironically, Winock has taken Charle to task for many of the same reasons I, and other revisionist-minded scholars, do:

> Les observations d'ordre général sont ainsi toujours passibles du démenti des exceptions...Un grand professeur haut placé...peut se déclarer dreyfusard. Un autre, dans la même position, choisira le camp d'en face. Dans les deux cas, on pourra affirmer que le

[18] Among them can be cited: his edited volume *L'Affaire Dreyfus* (Paris: Seuil, 1998), *Le Siècle des Intellectuels* (Paris: Seuil, 1998) in which the Affair occupies the first section, and parts of *Nationalisme, Antisémitisme et Fascisme en France* (Paris: Seuil, 2004).

> milieu est déterminant sur l'anticonformisme ou le conformisme de l'individu. On n'aura en effet rien expliqué.[19]

Yet Winock's own assessments of the Affair, for all their sensitivity to the nuances of individual engagement, ultimately return to an overarching polarity between human rights and nationalism that defines the Dreyfusard and anti-Dreyfusard camps respectively: in this he follows Julien Benda (1867-1956), author of *La Trahison des Clercs* as well as *La Jeunesse d'un Clerc*, which recounted his political awakening through the Affair. Benda's idealist conception of the intellectuals and their cause, or what their cause should have been, led him to assert that the two sides in the Affair were 'deux races morales'. Such an interpretation neglects the extent to which shared values were present across the Dreyfusard/anti-Dreyfusard divide, while also downplaying the uncertainty of individual choices that Winock ostensibly acknowledges. Furthermore, and most importantly in the context of this study, by keeping analysis of the Affair firmly in the domains of morality and political science, Winock's approach strips the reasoning of a Zola or a Brunetière of their literary specificity (as does Charle's, by other means), and in so doing ablates much of their origin and depth.

To return to Charle's findings, such were the macroscopic engagements of authors in the Affair: massive mobilization on both sides, with a slight numerical advantage to the Dreyfusards. Notable individuals can also be found in each group. Alongside Zola and France, the anarchist-leaning Octave Mirbeau, the more discreet Stéphane Mallarmé, and a young Proust were all Dreyfusards. Among their opponents were established poets and critics like François Coppée and Jules Lemaitre (both to be leaders of the Ligue de la Patrie Française), Maurice Barrès, for whom the Affair was decisive in his turn from 'prince de la jeunesse' to nationalist ideologue, Charles

[19] Winock, *Le Siècle des Intellectuels*, p.52.

Maurras and Paul Valéry. Valéry refused to have further dealings with Marcel Schwob after a fateful visit to the latter's house: "J'arrive dimanche chez Schwob. Qu'est-ce que je vois sur la cheminée?...La photographie du colonel Picquart...Je n'ai pas fait un pas de plus. J'ai dit à Schwob: Mon cher ami, vous avez cette photo sur votre cheminée...Je vous dis adieu."[20]

The prevalence and prominence of writers among those engaged in both camps indicates the stakes of the Affair, and perhaps also the narrative pull it exerted on those who wrote for a living, or for renown. But to note this prominence, and even to offer a sociological account of its divisions, leaves unanswered the question of how a writer could participate in a polemic which seemed primarily to be about a miscarriage of justice, and the relationship between the individual and the state. Faced with such subject-matter, individual writers would look back into their aesthetics for material with which to craft a new corpus about the crisis.

Chapter 1 will address Zola's complete writings on the Affair, from 1897 to 1900. He wrote over a dozen articles commenting on the controversy, a fact which can surprise because of the pre-eminence of 'J'Accuse...!'. In terms of cause-and-effect, that piece is understandably celebrated and pondered by historians because few pieces of writing by a private individual have so clearly altered the course of a major world crisis. But resituating 'J'Accuse...!' in the context of the pieces Zola produced both before and after it produces results both expected and unlooked-for. Because of the rational tone of his most famous article, in which the naturalist sounds like a particularly tendentious *juge d'instruction*, the increasingly emotional, even wild, tracts which would succeed it underline both the supreme self-mastery it took Zola to write 'J'Accuse...!' and the desperately fragile status of the Dreyfusard cause until the very end of the

[20] Paul Léautaud, *Journal Littéraire*, v.1 (Paris: Mercure de France, 1986), p. 20.

crisis from which it emerged essentially victorious. Zola's cries of outrage and anguish as he grew distant from the flow of events echo across time.

The analysis will be slightly different for Zola than for the three other writers studied, as his Dreyfus-era writings (eventually collected in the volume *La Vérité en Marche*) are notable for the almost certainly conscious distinctions between them and the copious polemical texts he had produced as the standard-bearer for the naturalist movement in the late 1870s and early 1880s. This corpus, collected in volumes such as *Le Roman Expérimental*, will be used to illustrate and explain the departures Zola took when his goals and subject-matter changed in 1897.

Ferdinand Brunetière will be the subject of Chapter 2. Unlike Zola, the threads running through his writings of 20 years earlier can still be clearly discerned by the time of the Dreyfus Affair. I will concentrate first on the book reviews that Brunetière gathered together under the title *Le Roman Naturaliste*.[21] Contrary to the received impression of these texts, Brunetière did not intend to produce an extended denunciation of naturalism; rather, he believed in a different *form* of naturalism and was attempting to wrest control of the term's meaning from Zola's grasp. Brunetière's affection was instead reserved for Zola's friend and rival Alphonse Daudet, now known principally for his picturesque collection of tales *Lettres de mon Moulin*, but then chiefly as a realist novelist who was able to sell six figures and be urged to run for the Academy.

A key moment in Brunetière's reorientation from aesthetics to politics, I will argue, was the publication of Paul Bourget's novel *Le Disciple* in 1889. Despite its status as a book review, Brunetière used his commentary on Bourget's work to take aim at the writers and scholars (or

[21] The first version appeared in 1884, with a third and final version in 1896.

'intellectuels', as they would come to be known a decade later) he saw as arrogantly preaching an irresponsible relativism. This would provide a pivot-point from which Brunetière locked horns with Marcellin Berthelot and others over the so-called 'banqueroute de la science' in the early 1890s, a clash which sketched out many of the advance positions for the polemics of the Affair a few years later. The fact that Brunetière could lead an assault on science from principles he had elaborated in his literary criticism demonstrates the degree to which both literature and science had become politicized at the time. The chapter finishes with an examination of Brunetière's well-known article 'Après le Procès', ostensibly a commentary on Zola's just-concluded libel trial and the Dreyfus Affair as a whole, but in truth a much wider-ranging text which serves as a telos to the intellectual trajectory its author had been following since the mid-1870s.

The third chapter will place the highest emphasis on close reading, centred as it is around Henry Céard's (1850-1924) Dreyfus-era journalism. One of these articles is entitled 'Némésis', and Céard seems to have seen himself as Zola's, taking up his pen almost as soon as Zola himself did at the end of 1897 and continuing to write on the Affair for as long as him, into 1900. Although Céard had other concerns than simply dogging Zola, this reactionary and reactive streak provides the thread linking his writings together and serves to frame the analysis.

At this point another objection might be raised. Zola and, to a lesser extent, Brunetière are major names in late-19th century French literature and among the most prominent players in the culture war ignited (or re-ignited) by the Affair. Few would dispute their inclusion here, or the importance of conclusions drawn from a study of their writing. Céard, in contrast (and the same is true of Saint-Georges de Bouhélier), is unknown even by name to many scholars of the French 19th century without this being a blot on their expertise, and was no household name in his lifetime. Why does either merit a full chapter in a work such as this?

There are several answers to this question. The first is hinted at by the brief editorial text that prefaces Céard's own article called 'Après le Procès', which preceded Brunetière's by a couple of weeks: "L'acte de M. Zola, judiciairement clos, reste moralement un problème. Il nous a paru intéressant d'en demander l'explication à l'un des hommes qui doivent à une vieille intimité avec M. Zola le moyen de la bien connaître et à un talent très personnel le moyen de la juger".[22] Even though Zola had explicitly cited the laws he was breaking with the accusations of 'J'Accuse...!' and had explained himself elsewhere, notably in an impassioned address to the trial jury, these two sentences reveal the extent to which incomprehension continued to reign among many French people regarding the recent actions of their best-known novelist.

As a result, intermediate figures such as Céard and Bouhélier, both prolific commentators with a personal connection to Zola, had an important role to play in shaping perceptions of the polemic and using their less elevated status to try and establish an understanding with a readership who could relate better to them. Céard proved himself particularly sensitive to these factors, at times addressing his readers directly to seek their acquiescence, at others presenting an article as a letter from concerned readers that he was merely transmitting through the newspaper.

Indeed 'transmission' becomes a key term justifying the spotlight I've accorded Céard and Bouhélier. In contrast to Zola and Brunetière, their two juniors offer a window into the way the 'big' ideas of the Dreyfus Affair were mediated through the press and pamphleteers on their way to the general public. Yet, because both were already authors with well-established aesthetic views, they can respond to the same analysis applied to Zola and Brunetière and provide distinct corpuses of literary and political writings.

[22] Henry Céard, 'Après le Procès', *Le Gaulois* (25 February 1898) [Editor's note].

Of course, the more usual motivation of raising the profile of a to-date underexamined author also applies. Many indices of literary fame can be cited for each. Céard went on to join the Académie Goncourt and was one of its most active members until his death. His contributions to the writing of the Rougon-Macquart have often been overlooked; for many of the individual novels Céard was Zola's go-to source on a range of subjects (notably medicine, as a former student), providing documentation and testimony that proved invaluable to Zola's creative process. Bouhélier's naturist movement is now a footnote in literary history, but did not seem destined for such a fate in 1897 when a future Nobel laureate in André Gide anxiously asked his friend Francis Jammes "es-tu naturiste?"[23] Jammes' evasive reply "je ne sais pas; je suis *votre* grand ami" gives a flavour of the near-miss that naturism would prove to be, largely as a result of Bouhélier's personal inability to back up his aesthetic proselytizing with compelling verse.

In 1924, Jean Jaurès' remains were transferred to the Pantheon, joining those of Zola and Hugo among many others. The socialist leader had been assassinated in 1914 on the eve of war, a victim of the murderous ire his pacifism aroused among political opponents.[24] Like Zola's own pantheonization sixteen years earlier, that of Jaurès became a political skirmish between figures and movements who had been active at the time of the Dreyfus Affair. Like Zola's, the ceremony commemorating Jaurès was intended to be a political victory for the Left that consecrated the ultimate outcome of the Affair.

---

[23] cited in Day, *Saint-Georges de Bouhélier's* Naturisme, p.126.

[24] The story of Jaurès' assassination and pantheonization mirrors the case of Dreyfus in a number of ways. Both the latter's wrongful conviction and the former's slaying emerged from a culture of revanchism in which the threat of Germany caused extreme measures to seem appealing to militarists and nationalists.
Jaurès' killer, Raoul Villain, a nationalist student, was kept in captivity throughout the war and only tried in 1919, when he was promptly acquitted amid a climate of triumphalism. Similarly, the journalist who shot and wounded Alfred Dreyfus at Zola's 1908 pantheonization ceremony, Louis Grégori, walked free from his trial.

The man entrusted with scripting the day's events was none other than Saint-Georges de Bouhélier. In collaboration with the composer Gustave Charpentier, whose works he had been praising for decades, Bouhélier oversaw the charged ceremony and composed the text for the concluding oratorio.[25] The status he had begun to gain during the Dreyfus Affair was on display as Jaurès was added to the ranks of France's 'grands hommes'.

The moment underlines how much is overlooked when only authors who retain contemporary fame are included. The reappearance of Bouhélier in the historical record at an event that explicitly spliced aesthetics to politics can tell us not only about his own standing but, more importantly, about the ripples that continued to spread from the initial miscarriage of justice thirty years earlier. Bouhélier was being rewarded for his choice of side in early 1898; what had been forgotten, and what will re-emerge in chapter 4, is the extent to which that choice had relied not on clearly-defined convictions but on an ability to aestheticize political events into a form that he could convincingly articulate.

This raises another question: does discussing the relationship between aesthetics and politics in writers' responses to the Affair commit one to a claim that one took precedence over the other? Does the fact that literary ideas informed political discourse mean that the latter is in some way subordinate to the former? These issues will be resolved in the conclusion, but on a methodological note, there will be no effort between here and there to tilt the answer in one direction or the other. Another strength of close reading is its ideological neutrality. To deal with a set of events such as the Dreyfus Affair, particularly when both sides of the conflict are being

[25] Avner Ben-Amos, « La « panthéonisation » de Jean Jaurès », *Terrain*, no. 15 - *Paraître en public* (October 1990), [Web], uploaded 07/09/07. URL : http://terrain.revues.org/2983. Retrieved 06/16/12.

considered, the interpretation of Céard or Zola's words must be limpid to be accurate; the method needs to get 'out of the way' of the material.

Such claims purposely overlook the traditions of schools such as New Criticism or deconstruction, both of which appeared at times to use sustained close reading for ideological purposes. Deconstructionists have been charged with anarchism for attempting to bring out the instability of central terms.[26] The New Critics have been described as using their methodology to instil a critical attitude towards society.[27] Attempting to use textual analysis to let the ideologies of the past speak unmediated may seem quixotic to critics of either school, and others besides.

There has been a broad reflection over the status and nature of close reading within literary studies in recent years, with scholars such as Jane Gallop and Jonathan Culler to the fore. Notable publications that have contributed to this reflection include Gallop's article 'The Historicization of Literary Studies and the Fate of Close Reading', in the 2007 edition of the MLA's *Profession*, as well as the Fall 2009 special issue of *Representations* edited by Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, and the edited volume *Rereading the New Criticism* overseen by Miranda Hickman and John McIntyre.[28]

Gallop's piece, a polemic against what she denounces as the erosion of reading skills and thus interpretive ability in students as a result of the increased focus on historicism evident in the field over the last 30 years, has generated numerous responses. Another point of reference, notably in Best and Marcus' issue of *Representations*, is Fredric Jameson's *The Political*

---

[26] Foucault's much-cited, but possibly apocryphal, reference to Derrida's work as "terrorisme obscurantiste" exemplifies this mentality.

[27] "Critical training was...seen [*by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren*] in broader social and political terms. Through the study of literary form, students would be made aware of the paradoxes and contradictions repressed by capitalist rationality." Mark Jancovich, *The Cultural Politics of the New Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993), p. 88.

[28] Miranda B. Hickman and John D. McIntyre (eds.), *Rereading the New Criticism*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2012.

Unconscious (1981), taken as emblematic of symptomatic reading; that is, "an interpretive method that argues that the most interesting aspect of a text is what it represses, and that, as...Jameson argued, interpretation should therefore seek "a latent meaning behind a manifest one"".[29] In Jameson's case, the theory underlying the approach was Marxism; for others, psychoanalysis has provided a similar impetus. Best and Marcus' 'surface reading' takes its distance from symptomatic reading, revalorizing various possible surface features of the text (such as materiality, verbal structure, and literal meaning) and relinquishing many of the heroic claims to interpretive totality that are the hallmark of Jameson's 'strong' critic.

Such are the principal features of current scholarship on close reading; a pervasive fear that it is being eroded from the activity of (most often) English departments, and a persistent uncertainty over just what kind of reading ought to be practiced: surface or symptomatic, historicist or formal? Peter Middleton has characterized close reading as "our contemporary term for a heterogeneous and largely unorganized set of practices and assumptions".[30]

What kind of reading am I doing here? The choice of a non-literary corpus appears to bring me closer to Gallop's view, in which what defines the practice is "not the books we read, but the way we read the books we read".[31] Gallop was referring to theoretical texts, but polemical ones seem to fit the same bill of proximity to literature that does not collapse into identity with it: yet she rather sidesteps the issue of just what 'close reading' means as a specific praxis rather than one defined by its opposition to historicism, which leaves us needing to turn elsewhere to complete the characterization. The attention I have tried to pay to such tropes as

---

[29] Best and Marcus, 'Surface Reading: an Introduction'. *Representations* 108 No.1 (Fall 2009), p. 3.
[30] Peter Middleton, *Distant Reading: Performance, Readership, and Consumption in Contemporary Poetry*. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2005, p. 5.
[31] Jane Gallop, 'The Ethics of Close Reading: Close Encounters.' *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 16.3 (Fall 2000), p. 17.

metaphor and catachresis, as well as to the intertextual relationships between articles and other textual features besides, is more akin to the surface reading extolled by Best and Marcus. And yet, without Jameson's degree of confidence in the deep meanings to be found in my objects of study, I have nevertheless been engaged in a process of revealing the aesthetic underpinnings of these four authors' political writings, a process that must be termed symptomatic to some degree, even if it does not rely on absence to proceed. It is symptomatic because, on the micro-historical level of each author's thought, I am arguing that the political ideas emanate from a more encompassing intellectual climate without which they could not function.

This may read as equivocation. But I think it fairer to say that each of these three conceptions of the critic's task have fundamental merit, and that there is no compelling need to choose between them. A hastily-written newspaper article can still be rich in literary devices that reward slow study; for that reason, I'm unsympathetic to attempts to restrict 'literarity' to any kind of canon. Surface features of texts are not always falsified ideological markers or contours to a more interesting absence. Yet the ability of criticism to reveal what lies hidden (and it is hard to argue that authors do not conceal as they write) must be considered one of its primary reasons for existing. This brings me back to the issue of ideological neutrality; by resisting a commitment to a particular vision of close reading, and instead allowing each of these conceptions to play a part in the analysis, I hope to have allowed the commitments of the authors themselves full voice.

As a historical method, questions of literary theory aside, there is much to recommend close reading. Many historians are sympathetic to literary criticism, and there have been attempts to import its methods into the historiographical realm. These have sometimes failed because of

awkward choices in the transposition,[32] but that in itself does not indict the historiographical merits of literary analysis. Close reading and historical analysis can meet in such places as the elucidation of obscure references in a text. If the text in question is a historical artefact like the articles and pamphlets studied here, a given allusion will need to be explained by reference not just to other texts but to events and movements that informed the author's position. As such, contextualizing the reference means putting it in dialogue with its period in order that they might both better be understood.

The danger is that, by narrowing the focus to specific writers and texts, no conclusions of general value can be reached. But the extraordinary level of documentation and analysis from which the Dreyfus Affair has benefited ever since Joseph Reinach began publishing his seven-volume history in 1901 renders such a fear vain in our case. Instead, by privileging the positions of individual authors, close reading can provide a corrective to top-down studies that align authors with trends or movements, without accounting for the divergences their thought takes from such alignments. Passing or cryptic references become threads in a larger pattern, building a picture of the period from the bottom up and connecting a figure like Céard to the nationalist leagues and ideologies with which he sympathized. The chapters that follow will demonstrate these principles in action.

[32] Lynn Hunt's work on the rhetoric of Revolutionary France, for example, rests on an archetypal reading of the rhetorical trends evident at the time: but by using Northrop Frye for inspiration, perhaps the most reductive possible picture of Revolutionary rhetoric is achieved and the nuances of contemporary texts do not receive a full airing.

The Dreyfus Affair - Background, Chronology, Causality

Every effort will be made to place each author and their writings in context as they are treated, but it is nevertheless essential to begin with a condensed overview of the Affair, not only how it began and unfolded but what the stakes were on both sides. Historians often distinguish three different 'Affaires Dreyfus', and while we will be concerned almost exclusively with the second, which begins with Zola's polemical intervention and ends with Dreyfus' pardon almost two years later (or perhaps with the amnesty law a few months after that), it exists in a close relationship not only with the first phase of the Affair but with a number of overarching features of contemporary French society.

The beginning was innocuous enough: a crumpled sheet of paper delivered to the French Army's 'Section de Statistique' on the 27th of September 1894. What is now called 'le bordereau' was collected by a French agent from a waste paper bin at the German embassy, and delivered to the blandly-named office that was in fact the Army's counterintelligence service, because it contained covert details of French military hardware and had clearly been written by a French officer intent on delivering secrets to the once and future enemy. An investigation was quickly launched, and the name of Alfred Dreyfus soon suggested as a possible author. Dreyfus, a young artillery captain and upwardly mobile in the increasingly meritocratic army despite a Jewish heritage that would have been an insurmountable impediment in times past, was then an intern in the army's General Staff.

Due in large part to pressure from a vociferous and well-informed[33] nationalist press led by the demagogues Edouard Drumont and Henri Rochefort, it was decided before Dreyfus'

[33] apparent leaks from within the army to nationalist journalists would continue to be a feature of the crisis, notably in the matter of Zola's father and revelations about his discharge from the Foreign Legion.

treason trial to convict him using secret evidence that was only shown to the court-martial judges and kept from Dreyfus' lawyer. This detail would eventually become known outside the official circles (notably surrounding General Mercier, then Minister of War and the architect of the strategy) in which it originated, and the irregularity would become vital to the campaign for revision of the case. Many of the early Dreyfusards were not necessarily convinced of Dreyfus' innocence, and/or restricted their advocacy to demanding that he be retried on grounds of judicial misconduct, rather than acquitted as a human rights martyr.

Dreyfus, despite repeated cries affirming his innocence that continued through the event itself, was publicly degraded in the courtyard of the Ecole Militaire on a cold January day in 1895.[34] He would spend the next four-and-a-half years on Devil's Island off Guyana, in a shack whose enclosure cut him off from the sea he could hear over the walls. The conditions and seclusion ruined his voice, teeth and appearance, shocking many observers when he eventually returned. Dreyfusard writings about Alfred often invoked his sufferings, with both Zola, in the press, and Dreyfus' wife Lucie, in her letters to him, calling him 'le crucifié'.

While Dreyfus suffered overseas, little changed in his case back in France. His brother Mathieu fought a lone fight to clear his name, meeting little to no success for several years. To the average French citizen, his name became all but forgotten. Yet within the army, a lieutenant-colonel called Georges Picquart was reading a little blue telegram with alarm and setting in motion a chain of events that would lead to both crisis and resolution. Picquart had become head of the same Section de Statistique that had fingered Dreyfus in 1894 - but when, in March 1896, he received the aforementioned evidence that showed a French officer was still in contact with

[34] A crowd was present, many of whose cries of 'Mort au juif!' were instrumental in persuading Theodor Herzl, present as a journalist, that European Jewish integration was a failure and should be abandoned in favour of Zionism.

the Germany spymaster, his suspicions fell on Walsin Esterhazy, a major of dubious reputation whose true role in the Affair remains ultimately unclear. What was immediately clear was that Esterhazy's handwriting seemed to match the bordereau; but this apparently exculpatory evidence for Dreyfus was doggedly ignored by the superiors to whom Picquart showed it. Instead, they began to marginalize Picquart, eventually sending him to North Africa and, when he failed to be killed there, imprisoning him on accusations of leaking military secrets.[35]

Eventually Mathieu's fruitless public campaign[36] and Picquart's equally fruitless private one converged. By late 1897 Mathieu was able to publicly denounce Esterhazy as the true author of the bordereau, thanks to a tip-off from Esterhazy's stockbroker, and demand both his inculpation and Alfred's release. So the first Affair became the second, a series of trials (first Esterhazy's, then Zola's - twice - and finally Dreyfus' second) and polemics which consumed France and gripped much of the rest of the world. This is the period covered by Zola's articles, and Céard's, and in which Brunetière and Bouhélier made their own commentaries.

Why did this, the case of one officer wrongly convicted, become such a major crisis? It took the French army 100 years officially to apologize to Dreyfus, and believers in his guilt can still be found in certain quarters.[37] In truth, France was already a divided nation, and the Affair brought many of its divisions to the surface; but it also moved the dividing lines as it played out. It is hard to overstate the oppressive climate of revanchism that pervaded the country after 1871, when defeat by Prussia had brought national humiliation and the loss of Alsace and part of

[35] Picquart's story is told in Ken Russell's 1991 HBO film *Prisoner of Honor*, where he is played by Richard Dreyfuss.

[36] Involving Bernard-Lazare, an author of anarchist sympathies, who was the first literary Dreyfusard. Lazare was hired by Mathieu to write the pamphlet that became *L'Affaire Dreyfus.Une Erreur Judiciaire* (1896). Like Herzl, the Dreyfus Affair contributed to his move towards Zionism.

[37] Michel Winock has written about finding anti-Dreyfusard high school students in his classes in the 1960s (Winock, 'Les Affaires Dreyfus' *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, No. 5, Special issue: Les guerres Franco-Françaises (Jan. - Mar., 1985), p. 19. Infamously, the former Resistance member André Figueras affirmed his anti-Dreyfusism in the 1982 book *Ce canaille de D...reyfus* (Paris: A. Figueras).

Lorraine. These wounds did not heal, even partially, until victory was achieved in World War I. One index of the atmosphere that reigned is the publication, in *Le Figaro*, of a yearly column commemorating the disastrous defeat at Sedan that had sealed the outcome of the Franco-Prussian War. Each year a different personality was invited to pen an article on the battle or its consequences; Zola had been one as recently as 1893, and the vitriolic tone of his anti-German remarks there proves that revanchism and bitterness were by no means the sole preserve of the militarist right.

But, even though the desire for military revenge spread across French society (with the exception of certain figures as disparate as Jean Jaurès and J.-K. Huysmans), its often fervid nature meant that accusations of unpatriotic sentiment were liable to be levelled at any time. For many Frenchmen espousing anti-Dreyfusard views, the campaign led by Zola and others was an unacceptable attack on the army. For a long time, few could believe that a panel of military judges could have acted disloyally in convicting Dreyfus. Although evidence of Esterhazy's writing and its similarity to that of the bordereau was available as of late 1897, the fact that several handwriting experts had rejected the link meant that ordinary observers tended to retreat to their preconceived views, which were overwhelmingly favourable to the military.

This point is crucial to retain when reading our authors' reflections on the Affair. Although the case seems clear now, there was genuine confusion at the time; cynical anti-Dreyfusards who knew the truth and rejected it anyway were, for much of the controversy, limited to the upper echelons of the General Staff. I have already evoked the presentation of Céard's article purporting to explain Zola's actions after his trial; it reflects the hunger among *Le Gaulois'* readership for genuine illumination, and also indicates the extent of the challenge facing the Dreyfusards.

In addition to the confusion bred by unquestioning trust in the military, widespread anti-Semitism posed a further barrier to Dreyfusard arguments. Edouard Drumont, author of the 1885 screed *La France Juive*, not only inflamed such sentiments in the pages of his newspaper *La Libre Parole*, but won election to the French National Assembly in May 1898, an election whose outcome was marked by the Affair.[38] It was in this period that Charles Maurras, a figure who would remain prominent in nationalist circles into the Vichy regime almost a half-century later,[39] articulated his belief in the "quatre états confédérés"; four constituencies that formed a fifth column in French society. These were Jews, Freemasons, Protestants and 'métèques', sometimes translated as 'wogs'. Even when the weight of the evidence in Dreyfus' favour began to mount, many were unwilling to favour a Jew (even an innocent one) over what they saw as the interests of the nation.

One source of anti-Semitism in fin-de-siècle France was traditional Catholic rhetoric painting Jews as deicides. The conflict between conservative Catholics and other groups had been playing out since at least the Revolution and was rekindled by the Dreyfus Affair; the newspapers with genuinely national readerships tended to be Catholic, notably *La Croix*, which carried a front-page article signed 'Le Paysan' the day after 'J'Accuse!...' was published that ended as follows:

> Nous le [*le peuple juif*] combattons, comme nous combattrions l'Allemagne ou l'Italie en cas d'invasion.

---

[38] While the anti-Dreyfusard Drumont won a seat in Algiers (which had recently seen deadly riots targeting Jews), Dreyfusard leaders lost theirs: Jean Jaurès in the Tarn and Joseph Reinach in the Basses-Alpes.
These individual vicissitudes are all the more striking given that the overall outcome of the May 1898 election was in fact a swing to the left, with Socialists and Radical-Socialists picking up seats at the expense of the still-dominant centrist Republicans, and conservative parties also suffering significant losses.

[39] As his conviction on collaboration charges was read out in 1945, Maurras famously exclaimed "C'est la revanche de Dreyfus!"

> Nous le combattons parce qu'au mépris de l'hospitalité française et par trahison, en un baiser de Judas, il a déclaré la guerre à la nation![40]

Many individual Catholics[41] revolted against such language, but the organizational power of groups such as the Assumptionists, who published *La Croix*, extended the reach of their message deep into rural areas, as the above author's pseudonym suggests. Within Paris, the culture war was symbolized by the duelling spires of the Eiffel Tower and the Sacré-Coeur, the latter built by public subscription to atone for France's sin in losing the Franco-Prussian War through inadequate devotion, the latter a secular response created for the 1889 Universal Exposition.[42] As previously indicated, the earlier years of the 1890s had seen fierce skirmishes between proponents of scientism and their opponents involved with the spiritual revival. In the literary sphere a number of high-profile conversions to Catholicism took place in these years, perhaps foremost among them Brunetière himself and J.-K. Huysmans.[43] The sociological divide that these polemics helped deepen would have important implications during the Affair, leading

---

[40] *La Croix*, 14th of January 1898, p. 1, article 'Deux Lois'.

[41] Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, as Antoine Compagnon has illustrated, provides an example of such a figure (Compagnon, *Connaissez-Vous Brunetière* (Paris: Seuil, 1997), pp. 94-97).

[42] Frederick Brown has discussed both structures and their cultural stakes in *For the Soul of France* (New York: Knopf, 2010).

[43] Huysmans' attitude to the Affair was both unique and aestheticized, and as such merits some discussion here. Jean-Marie Seillan, the leading scholar of the author's view on politics and religion, notes that "Huysmans est donc un antidreyfusard antimilitariste. Jules Sageret observe que « par là, il trouve le moyen d'être seul de son opinion » (in *Les grands convertis*, Mercure de France, 1906, p. 251)." (*Romantisme* 27 no.95 [1997], p. 117, f/n)

For decades Huysmans scholarship glossed over its man's virulent anti-Semitism, which Seillan attributes to three causes; the antijudaic discourse of his newfound faith, a reactionary view of economics that shunned the fiscal liberalism he saw as dominated by Jews, and finally a bodily revulsion towards certain stereotypically Jewish traits, about which he wrote in a style familiar to readers of his most purple prose passages. Huysmans thus recapitulates the three dominant forms of fin-de-siècle anti-Semitism - the theological, the economic and the biological - in his idiosyncratic manner.

Of the three, the last appears to have dominated in Huysmans' worldview; he took elements from his novels, notably the bodily sufferings of des Esseintes in *A Rebours*, and applied them to a largely private corpus of hatred (in diaries and correspondence).

Despite pronouncing himself on the Dreyfus Affair much less than the writers who will be discussed in detail, Huysmans did voice his opinion, notably on Zola's actions, and his views will provide a closely-related counterpoint to Céard's in Chapter 3.

many in France to doubt the good faith of the authors and academics lending their support to Dreyfus. Individual academic disciplines, as Charle has shown, became politicized, and the department or faculty in which a professor taught would be a strong predictor of their allegiance.[44]

This was the atmosphere in which Zola published 'J'Accuse...!' in the pages of *L'Aurore* newspaper, on the morning of the 13th of January, 1898. Styled as an open letter to Félix Faure, the anti-Dreyfusard president of France, its title suggested by Georges Clemenceau, editor of *L'Aurore* and, like Zola, a Dreyfusard leader, the article blew open the Dreyfus case by jettisoning the legalist arguments for revision that had dominated among his allies until then and openly accusing the army of a cover-up. Zola ended by naming the libel laws he was challenging, daring the army and the government to come after him. This they did, under pressure from deputies on the right of the Chamber, and the following month Zola was in court for over a fortnight facing they charges they brought.

Despite daring work by his lawyer, Fernand Labori, and an impassioned personal address to the jury, Zola was unanimously convicted and received the maximum sentence of a 3,000 franc fine and three months in jail. Yet the case had several more turns; Labori successfully had the verdict annulled on the basis that the wrong party had brought the suit, and a new trial was set for July in Versailles. When it became clear that its verdict would be inexorable, Zola was persuaded to flee France for what became almost a year of exile in England. In his absence, Alfred Dreyfus' own legal situation began to change.

[44] For instance, 83.3% of faculty at the Ecole des Chartes engaged in the Affair were Dreyfusards, whereas 69.1% of law professors who chose a side were anti-Dreyfusard. (Charle, *La Naissance des 'Intellectuels'*, p. 246).

Zola's avoidance of a definitive conviction had the desired effect; it prolonged the Affair and contributed to the fall of the cabinet, led by Jules Méline, that had overseen the crisis until then. The new government, led by Robert Brisson, a former ally of Zola's in the science/religion controversy, featured Godefroy Cavaignac as war minister. With an irony befitting the literary character Zola had discerned in events from the beginning, Cavaignac's zeal in seeking ultimate and public proof of Dreyfus' guilt would, instead, ultimately bring about his exoneration. Cavaignac ordered the army to go back into the files and provide him with a document that could convince the electorate: but in the process, it became clear that a colonel named Hubert Henry, working within the Section de Statistique, had engaged in forgery to trump up the evidence. Interrogated by his minister at the end of August, Henry confessed and slit his throat with a razor the next day.

This sad and grisly sequence of events kindled hope among Dreyfus' family and allies for the first time in months. Public opinion began to turn in their favour, albeit only partially: Drumont's *Libre Parole* opened a public subscription for a monument to Henry in December, among whose signatories was Paul Valéry.[45] Dreyfus' court-martial verdict was sent to the Cour de Cassation in October 1898, and after months of deliberation the court ordered a retrial, which was set for Rennes in August 1899.[46] Meanwhile, a new government of Dreyfusard Republicans came to power following the failure of the Brisson and Dupuy cabinets, and Zola took advantage of the changed climate to return in June, announcing his arrival with an article in *L'Aurore*.

---

[45] Eric Cahm, *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, pp. 167-8. The primary argument in Henry's favour among his sympathizers became the notion of the 'faux patriotique', the idea that his forgeries had been made in order to serve a higher truth, possibly to protect documents too sensitive to be revealed.

[46] The Cour de Cassation is not an appeal court as the term tends to be understood in English-influenced legal systems, but is a court of final appeal having jurisdiction over the correct application of the law by lower courts. As such it has the power to annul verdicts rendered by them, or to order retrials; it cannot conduct new trials based on a reconsideration of the initial facts of a case. In Dreyfus' case, the presence of secret evidence in the 1894 proceedings constituted a violation, and the reason for the Cour de Cassation's sending the case before a new tribunal.

From certain failure a year earlier, the Dreyfusard campaign appeared to be on its victory lap: but the military judges in Rennes changed the narrative once again. After a series of tense and sometimes confrontational sessions, a 5-2 verdict of guilty with extenuating circumstances was returned. While many anti-Dreyfusards briefly exulted, the shock and horror felt by their adversaries was expressed in Zola's agonized piece 'Le Cinquième Acte'. But the manifestly political nature of the verdict allowed for a presidential pardon to be extended within days,[47] and on the 19th of September Dreyfus was, for the first time in almost five years, a free man.

The Dreyfus Affair's most violent convulsions were past, and the 'second' Affair over. The third began, and would last in one form or another until 1908. Fissures immediately appeared among the Dreyfusards; Alfred's health made it clear that to refuse the pardon and return to Devil's Island, even briefly, would doom him, yet the idealists among them were angered that he took what they saw as the dishonourable option. A greater gulf appeared the following year, when the French parliament drafted a general amnesty for all actions connected to the Dreyfus Affair. The politicians (chief among them Clemenceau and Jaurès, who agreed on little else except the Affair) tended to favour the amnesty, on the grounds that other causes beckoned and could not be pursued while legal matters kept the polemic current.[48] Those, like Labori and Zola, outside the political process rejected the amnesty as a whitewash that would overwhelmingly absolve anti-Dreyfusard criminality. Zola's last two articles on the Affair, both from 1900, were a plea to the Senate to reject the amnesty, and a letter to Loubet lamenting its promulgation.

---

[47] Faure, to whom 'J'Accuse...!' had been addressed, had died in January while over-exerting himself with his mistress. The new president, Emile Loubet, was a partisan of Dreyfus' acquittal and had been assaulted by anti-Dreyfusards at the Auteuil racetrack as a result.

[48] Several legal cases were cut short by the amnesty. Zola was involved in a suit and counter-suit against the handwriting experts who had spoken for Dreyfus' guilt, and he was also pursuing Ernest Judet, the author of articles in 1898 that contained slanderous accusations against Zola's long-dead father (more on these in Chapter 3). Last but not least, his Versailles libel trial was still slated, even if repeatedly deferred.

Alfred Dreyfus' name was not officially cleared until 1906, when the Cour de Cassation annulled the Rennes verdict. He was readmitted to the army and served, in his fifties, in World War I. Picquart also emerged from his legal troubles with the army, eventually becoming war minister and a general. Zola and Brunetière both died within a few years of the second Affair's conclusion, Brunetière of cancer in 1906, Zola of a suspicious asphyxiation in 1902.[49] The final major act of the Affair was the ceremony in which he was inducted into the Pantheon, in the summer of 1908. Both the parliamentary debates that led to the vote decreeing the transfer, and the ceremony itself, revived many of the antagonisms and passions of 10 years earlier, and Alfred Dreyfus barely escaped with his life after being shot by a military correspondent.

Why does the Dreyfus Affair, and writers' roles in it, still matter?[50] The Affair serves as a reminder that modern democracies remain susceptible to painful divisions that can imperil their very democratic status. Given the right combination of individual circumstances and larger stakes, something as 'small' as the conviction of a low-ranking officer can ignite a fire that touches every citizen. The stories of the writers who were pulled into the scandal speak to us because they offer a private window into the commerce between art and politics. Behind the ink of these articles and pamphlets yawns a multitude of ideas struggling to take form and find coherence - regionalism, faith, race, science, human rights, and others besides.

Viewed with a sufficiently wide focus and at sufficient distance, the divisions and allegiances of the Affair can seem inevitable; socialist against monarchist, militarist against aesthete, student against teacher. But each of the four cases examined here will show wide the

---

[49] Alain Pagès' investigation of the slim historical evidence is detailed in his *Emile Zola, de l'Affaire Dreyfus au Panthéon* (Saint Paul: Souny, 2008), pp. 266-92.

[50] A 2009 book by Louis Begley, perhaps better known as the author of *About Schmidt*, explicitly aims to answer the question, and does so by drawing parallels between Dreyfus' treatment and those of the prisoners at Guantanamo Bay.

interstices of these positions were, how personal the process of choosing became. In a literary field which had seen the Parnassians champion art for art's sake and in which symbolists turned away from the social order, politics had nevertheless persisted in latent form. It was about to be transfigured.

Truth, Justice, and Science: Zola, Defender of Naturalism and Dreyfus

In the Oscar-winning 1937 film *The Life of Emile Zola*, Paul Muni as Zola comments to his wife Alexandrine: "You know, it's a queer thing, this Dreyfus Affair. Before it, I thought my work was done. I could sit back and dream a little.."[51] Earlier in the same film, he tells Lucie Dreyfus: "I've lived my life. I've had enough of fighting, turmoil, strife. I'm happy, contented here. Why should I...?"[52] Although both these conversations were imagined by the screenwriters, they capture something of the ambivalence that has marked studies of Zola and the Dreyfus Affair. Zola the author of 'J'Accuse...!' and Zola the author of *L'Assommoir* have never sat easily alongside each other. In the interests of dramatic tension, the Hollywood narrative presents Zola's successful novelistic career as a material impediment to his engagement in the crisis.

Two years before William Dieterle's film, the writer and politician Léon Blum, reflecting on the Affair almost 40 years on (and one year before becoming France's first Jewish prime minister), famously commented: "Pour les Dreyfusards, Zola était moins un héros qu'un allié inattendu et inestimable."[53] These two very different texts from the 1930s thus express a similar idea: that Zola was an unlikely protagonist in the Affair, seized from without by events and compelled to join a fight that no-one, least of all himself, had thought was his.

Even Alain Pagès, a major specialist of both Zolas, has separated the two, choosing to treat Zola's actions in the Affair as a thing apart in *Emile Zola, un Intellectuel dans L'Affaire Dreyfus* (1991). When he does briefly discuss their literary dimension, Pagès elects to discuss the novel *La Bête Humaine* (1890), in which a similar miscarriage of justice was depicted. While these similarities occupy four pages of his study, the fact that the 1898 novel *Paris* had closed by

[51] *The Life of Emile Zola*. Dir. William Dieterle. Perf. Paul Muni. Warner Home Video, 2005. DVD. 1:47:08-17.
[52] *The Life of Emile Zola,* 59:25-35.
[53] Cited in Pagès (Paris: Séguier), p.244.

prophesying "la moisson future de vérité et de justice" receives only one line.[54] In other words, narrative supersedes concept: an incident from one novel is deemed more noteworthy than the shared ideals on show in another.

What of Zola's biographers, who have no choice but to deal with his views on literature and his views on the Affair within the same covers? Even here, the dualism persists. Henri Mitterand, the greatest authority on Zola's life and work, presents his man's intervention thus in volume III of his monumental *Zola*: "Si les défenseurs de Dreyfus ont besoin d'une grande voix et d'une grande plume, il n'en est point d'autre, en 1897, dans le champ littéraire, que celle de Zola. Aucun autre écrivain contemporain n'a une pareille carrure ni une pareille expérience de l'affrontement idéologique et politique."[55] Note the language here: firstly, the talk is of 'drafting' Zola, with agency assigned not to him but to Dreyfus' family and friends. His stature is also defined negatively; no-one *else* is a bigger name. And, finally, his importance is given in sociological and biographic terms, respectively "carrure" and "affrontement idéologique".

Yet the sociological approach, as exemplified most memorably by Christophe Charle, has particular trouble accounting for Zola's role in the crisis. In his short account of Zola's role, Charle is obliged to use the label "dominant des dominés de la classe dominante",[56] terms taken from his mapping out of the contemporary literary field, to describe the author's status, at which point the explanatory power of that field starts to wither. The Bourdieusian approach exemplified by Charle's study has remarkable strength at the macro level, accounting with great clarity for the overall groupings of intellectuals in the *fin-de-siècle* and, most clearly, the Dreyfus Affair; yet at the individual level it can break down into the unconvincing equivocation cited above.

---

[54] Pagès, *Emile Zola,* pp. 52-5.
[55] Mitterand, *Zola* III (Paris: Fayard, 2002). pp. 333-4.
[56] Charle, *La Naissance des 'Intellectuels'*, p. 218.

Indeed, even if such an approach were able to give clearer reasons for the individual choices made by intellectuals during the Affair, it would not tell us *how* those choices were acted out and justified, only what their social conditions of their occurrence were. It's for this reason that I choose the term 'micro-histories of ideas' to describe this chapter and the three that follow. Rather than work top-down from the field level to that of the individual, I will work outwards from individuals, accounting for their specific positions on intellectual grounds but also expanding those individual accounts by connecting them to the overarching world of ideas that existed in France at the end of the nineteenth century.

How will this work in the case of Zola? Firstly, by considering his writings on the Dreyfus Affair as a whole. 'J'Accuse...!' itself has understandably drawn the lion's share of critical and historical attention, not only because of its notoriety but because of its immense historical power compared to its twelve siblings (Zola wrote a total of thirteen articles on the Affair, which he then collected as *La Vérité en Marche* in 1901). No other text of Zola's, and very few in history, have changed the course of a crisis so clearly as his open letter to president Félix Faure.

Yet when those writings are considered in intellectual rather than functional terms, for their content rather than their effect (which is precisely what must be done in order to explain Zola's actions in the Affair themselves, rather than their consequences), the rest of *La Vérité en Marche* takes on greater stature. Currents not to be found in 'J'Accuse...!' itself leap off the page; others are modified across a series of texts. And, I will argue, in the later stages of the crisis Zola's writing takes on new, darker shadings, bringing him closer to the *mundus inversus* topos common to many polemicists between 1868 and 1968, as identified by Marc Angenot in his

work *La Parole Pamphlétaire*. We will begin to see how the elder statesman of naturalism's engagement is situated in a tradition in modern French intellectual life.

These new aspects of *La Vérité en Marche* will be revealed by placing them in dialogue with Zola's earlier aesthetic writings, principally those collected in *Le Roman Expérimental* in 1880. Beyond the notorious title essay, the volume contains numerous other reflections on various aspects of the writer's craft, from description to morality to money and its impact on the profession. In this respect it parallels *La Vérité en Marche*; both volumes' reputations are dominated by one notorious text ('Le Roman Expérimental' and 'J'Accuse...!' respectively), but in fact contain a wealth of other ideas spread across an assortment of writings. Most intriguingly, both *La Vérité en Marche* and *Le Roman Expérimental* contain texts entitled 'Lettre à la Jeunesse'.

This is a first clue that the links between the two corpuses are closer than has been acknowledged, and my discussion of the two will underline the exact nature of that relationship. Unlike Warner Bros. or Blum, then, I will be arguing for a Zola whose literary and political thought was indissoluble, the former defining and predicting the latter, and in the process creating a model of the public intellectual that remains current over a century later.

The other set of writings that can best inform our understanding is Zola's late novels, those created after he concluded his 25-year labour on the *Rougon-Macquart* cycle in 1893. He created two further, shorter series, *Les Trois Villes* and *Les Quatre Evangiles*, the latter of which was cut short at 3 by his 1902 death.[57] By a chronological quirk, the Dreyfus Affair fell directly in between the two series, with the last *Ville* novel - *Paris* - having been completed shortly

[57] This may have been a murder related to his Dreyfusard advocacy; see Pagès' *Emile Zola: de* J'Accuse! *au Panthéon* for the most detailed enquiry into the author's death.

before Auguste Scheurer-Kestner won Zola over to Dreyfusism. These six novels will be examined for evidence of shifts in Zola's philosophy and rhetoric that bear on the Affair.

I will use a combination of close reading and lexicographical analysis to draw out these changes. The two techniques are not as disparate as they might appear. Cataloguing a term's appearances in a corpus does, it is true, appear far removed from the work of unpacking a single passage in the details of its language and style. Yet the former can be used to direct the latter, highlighting individual uses that embody its significance to the whole work or corpus. This, I suggest, is precisely what certain passages from *Rome* and *Paris* serve to do. They will show that Zola did not create a new vocabulary when joining the fight in 1897; he drew it from his recent fiction, as well as his older literary battles.

Prehistory of the polemic: *L'Assommoir*

One of the central themes Zola repurposes from his earlier defences of naturalism to aid in the defence of Dreyfus is that of the power of truth. Zola's opponents in both controversies charge him repeatedly with the danger of his revelations and claims. It is instructive, in this regard, to compare the furore surrounding the 1877 publication of *L'Assommoir* with what would follow a little over 20 years later. The reception of that novel was not the first occasion on which Zola had been drawn into a major dispute; ten years earlier, *Thérèse Raquin* had drawn its share of vitriol, notably Louis Ulbach's article on "La Littérature Putride". But Zola was still a young, largely unknown author in 1867, and the furore had no wider significance. *L'Assommoir* marked his entry into the first rank of living French authors, and his decision to portray the working-class inhabitants of the Goutte-d'Or neighbourhood was politically loaded.

The political context into which *L'Assommoir* was published differed greatly from that of the Dreyfus Affair. Although both took place under the Third Republic, when the novel appeared the 'Ordre Moral' regime was still in place (soon to fall in the 16th of May, 1877 constitutional crisis). Under Marshal Mac-Mahon's presidency, the Ordre Moral saw parliament dominated by monarchist deputies whose intent was to pave the way for a restoration. Part of this programme was a commitment to highly conservative principles which valued order and conformity over everything else. As Mac-Mahon put it at the beginning of the Ordre Moral, in 1873: « Nous maintiendrons la paix intérieure et les principes sur lesquels repose notre société. » In a nation still newly marked by the twin wounds of defeat by Prussia and fratricide in the Commune, such notions were appealing to many, and infuriating to others, Zola included. The term 'ordre moral' still carries a political charge in modern France, as an accusation to be used against politicians suspected of seeking to control the country's moral discourse.

In this light, the purpose of much of Zola's rhetoric in the preface of *L'Assommoir* becomes clearer. The novel was not published in volume until January 1877, having begun serialization in *Le Bien Public* on the 13th of April 1876. By the time Zola came to write the preface, then, months of heated condemnations and defences of the text had already filled Paris. The condemnation was principally of a moral variety, with even the more literary objections frequently being ethically-grounded; critics who accused Zola of bad style were often shocked or discomfited by the use of working-class language in the text. Sensibilities were particularly offended by that language's intrusion into the narrative voice through Zola's pervasive use of free indirect style, in which third-person narration retains the idiomatic features of the particular character's speech or thoughts.

It is thus unsurprising that, from the outset, the author should couch the preface in morally-tinged language. He asserts that « *Les Rougon-Macquart* doivent se composer d'une vingtaine de romans. Depuis 1869, le plan général est arrêté, et je le suis avec une rigueur extrême. *L'Assommoir* est venu à son heure, je l'ai écrit, comme j'écrirai les autres, sans me déranger une seconde de ma ligne droite. C'est ce qui fait ma force. J'ai un but auquel je vais. »[58] 'Rigueur' and 'ligne droite' evoke an ascetic discipline that distances the writer from the degradation on display in his text. That content is, in Zola's words, « de la morale en action », and his commitment to exposing the wretchedness of working class life means that « *L'Assommoir* est à coup sûr le plus chaste de mes livres ». Zola thus argues on the same grounds as his critics, enshrining morality as a vital aspect of the novelist's art, and asserting simply that « la forme seule a effaré. On s'est fâché contre des mots. »[59] Such words are already a subject for lexicographers, and as Zola suggests that his has been « un travail purement philologique », the argot's presence in *L'Assommoir* has been sanctioned by scholarship.

In the years following the publication of *L'Assommoir*, Zola's polemical activity would increase, peaking in 1880 with the publication of *Le Roman Expérimental*, many of whose sections had appeared in *Le Messager de l'Europe* of Saint Petersburg over the preceding three years. In this period his articles deal with two principal themes; the theoretical status of the naturalist novel, in texts such as *Le Roman Expérimental* itself, and the role of morality in the novel. Examples of the latter include 'De la Moralité' and 'La Littérature Obscène'.

In these pieces Zola's exposes the delight reputable newspapers, the same which force corrections and censorship on some of the literary works they serialize, take in displaying every

[58] Emile Zola, *Ecrits sur le Roman*, ed. Henri Mitterand, (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2004), p. 181.
[59] ibid., p. 182.

salacious detail of the criminal cases which they cover. For instance, *Le Figaro* played home to phrases such as « Un domestique n'a-t-il pas déclaré qu'il avait vu, certain jour, M. X*** entrer avec sa fille dans les cabinets d'aisances, allégation qui a motivé une enquête contradictoire sur la dimension des cabinets et la possibilité pour deux personnes de s'y tenir à la fois ».[60] Hints of incest, and a toilet to boot; these were among the themes that naturalists were taken to task for using.

In passing, Zola uses this to rebuke Edmond de Goncourt's provocative preface to *Les Frères Zemganno*, in which the older man had urged younger novelists to study the higher echelons of society and avoid the "canaille littéraire", which was clearly intended to mean either Zola or his characters – or both. Zola uses his write-up of journalistic prurience to argue that the upper classes are no purer or better-behaved than the characters of *L'Assommoir*: « la bête humaine est la même partout, le vêtement seul diffère ».[61] Indeed, over a decade later *La Bête Humaine* would become one of the Zola novels that covers the most social ground, going from poor railwaymen to minor nobility and the upper magistrature, and subjecting all to a similar drive of appetites and misdeeds.

For Zola, throughout his career, nothing and no-one was above an exposition of its workings and faults. He proved his willingness to be subjected to the same treatment in 1895 by agreeing to Dr. Edouard Toulouse's *Enquête médico-psychologique sur les rapports de la supériorité intellectuelle avec la névropathie* – and writing its introduction.[62] Toulouse's investigation of Zola was both physiological and psychological; among other things, the medical team measured the author's skull and tested his urine, and Zola submitted a chaste set of word-

[60] ibid., p. 269.
[61] ibid., p. 271.
[62] Mitterand, *Zola* vol.III, p. 235.

associations in response to Toulouse's questionnaire. In explaining why he had participated in the study, Zola asserted to the book's readers that « tout ce qui tend à faire de la vérité ne peut être qu'excellent ». Just in time for the Dreyfus Affair, Zola had renewed on a personal, medical level his aesthetic commitment to truth.

During the crisis, then, the idea that the army should be sacrosanct and its workings left unexamined in the interests of security would have no hold over him, and his earlier ideas on the role of morality in literature confirm the consistency of that perspective. In both polemics, the questions of how much to reveal, and of the limits to acceptable discourse, were cardinal. Regarding naturalism, Zola's answer was the same as it would be in the Affair; everything must be revealed, and no limits were justified.

In both polemics also, taking such a line exposed Zola to criticism from the left as well as the right. During the reception of *L'Assommoir*, the journalist and vaudeville producer Albert Millaud reproached Zola for his depiction of working class dissolution in articles published in *Le Figaro*. While critics on the right feared the consequences that such a naked display of the common people's ways of life might have on the rest of society, thinkers like Millaud found Zola disloyal to a class for which he appeared to have sympathy, in showing their worst characteristics in an influential novel. Zola's reply was, firstly, that he rejected the term 'écrivain démocratique et quelque peu naturaliste' by which Millaud had described him: « j'entends être un romancier tout court, sans épithète: si vous tenez à me qualifier, dites que je suis un romancier naturaliste, ce qui ne me chagrinera pas. Mes opinions politiques ne sont pas en cause... ».[63]

As he will in the Dreyfus Affair, Zola stresses the non-partisan nature of his intervention, his commitment to truth and only to truth, no matter whom it should offend or even hurt. « Quant

[63] *Ecrits sur le Roman,* p. 73.

à ma peinture d'une certain classe ouvrière, elle est telle que je l'ai voulue, sans une ombre, sans un adoucissement. Je dis ce que je vois, je verbalise simplement, et je laisse aux moralistes le soin de tirer la leçon ».[64] Yet this last statement is immediately undermined by a list of the changes he would make to workers' living conditions in order for their reality to be less bleak than it was in *L'Assommoir*. There is thus some tension between 'moraliser' and 'verbaliser' in Zola's defence of his work, but when the former appears it always proceeds from the latter; ethical redress can only be made if every symptom of the ill has been enumerated and discussed.

Moralism of this kind put Zola at odds, as he saw it, with Protestant morality. Several times in this period, the author singled out the influence of Protestantism on moral discourse in France for strong criticism. Henri Mitterand points out that underneath such generalized statements on the religion lay a personal dispute with the Protestant critic Edmond Schérer, who had attacked Zola's works on moral grounds.[65] But the naturalist does not, in 'De la Moralité dans la Littérature', acknowledge this clash, speaking instead of « l'influence de plus en plus grande du protestantisme sur nos mœurs, en politique et en littérature. Les doctrinaires, les dogmatiques, le pudibonds, ne sont que des protestants plus ou moins avoués ».[66]

These attacks are rather at odds with Zola's later championing of religious freedom and justice for all Frenchmen in the Affair. Even if they were a veil for his quarrel with Schérer, such a willingness to assail all Protestants (and, worse, to accuse anyone of similar views of 'closet' Protestantism) in order to reach his opponent constitutes one of the less edifying moments of his critical career. This is all the truer in light of the fact that nearly all the major doctrinaires to whom he would be opposed in 1898 also wrote anti-Protestant tracts; Maurice Barrès, Charles

[64] ibid., p. 174.
[65] ibid., p. 288, f/n.
[66] ibid., p. 286.

Maurras and Edouard Drumont each contributed at least one text to the copious, and somewhat under-explored, library of anti-Protestant rhetoric in the early Third Republic.[67] For example, Maurras used a lurid fable of the Monod family history to savage the anti-Dreyfusism of Gabriel Monod, noted historian and member of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques.

Zola's critique is not as extreme as these; he neither alludes to Protestants as un-French, nor suggests that any kind of reckoning will come for them, in the manner for instance of Drumont (who inserted a chapter condemning Protestants into *La France Juive*). But 'De la Moralité dans la Littérature' and its follow-ups of 1881, 'Protestantisme' and 'Réponse aux Protestants', do illustrate Zola's willingness to use partisan attacks in his polemical writing. These are largely absent from *La Vérité en Marche,* partly due to the breadth of opposition to his cause there, anti-Dreyfusism spanning multiple sectors of French society and thought. Catholicism was a frequent opponent for Zola in the last decade of his life.[68] However, although staunch Catholics tended to be the most opposed to the Republic, the tenor of Zola's attacks in *La Verité en Marche* is different to that on display in the earlier articles on morality and literature; he does not assail Catholics in an analogous manner to his earlier critiques of Protestantism.[69] The difference in tone and the excising of sectarian content from the Dreyfus

[67] For a discussion of the phenomenon, see Steven Hause's article of that name (French Historical Studies 16:1 [Spring, 1989], 183-201).

[68] Each of the three volumes of the *Trois Villes* was critical of mainstream Catholicism through the travails experienced by their protagonist, an unorthodox priest called Pierre Froment. In Zola's last novel, *Vérité*, partly an allegory of the Dreyfus Affair, the organization attacking the oppressed Jew (here a schoolteacher called Simon), has become the Catholic church rather than the army.

[69] The exception is in the penultimate article, 'Lettre au Sénat', which protested an upcoming vote by that body on the amnesty law for all acts related to the Dreyfus Affair. There, Zola's desperation to avoid the inexorable judicial whitewash boils over in a tirade that lays France's ills on a campaign of cooption by Rome: « un envahissement sourd s'est fait...les jésuites se sont emparés de la jeunesse, avec une adresse incomparable...la France de Voltaire...s'est réveillée cléricale, au mains d'une administration, d'une magistrature, d'une haute armée qui prend son mot d'ordre à Rome. » (*La Vérité en Marche*, p. 188). Zola's impulse to vilify groups opposed to his ideals had not disappeared, and he gave in to it when those ideals had been thwarted by the Affair's endgame.

texts was, as will be shown, matched by a shift in some of the concepts Zola used to justify his position.

Zola and French Youth

Zola shared with his critics on the right the fear of Germany, although he used it in a very different way. His concern with restoring France in the wake of the 1870 defeat may not have matched that of a Barrès or Paul Déroulède, the poet of *revanche* who led the Ligue des Patriotes, but it is a theme that returns often in his writings. It also provides a ready-made comparison between the naturalist polemics and those for Dreyfus: in both conflicts, Zola produced a text entitled 'Lettre à la Jeunesse', and a comparison of the two is revealing. Bestowing the same name on two articles, one on literature and society, the other on a political crisis, separated by over 18 years reveals the conscious dimension to Zola's reuse of past polemical material. The first appeared in *Le Messager de l'Europe* of St. Petersburg, as well as in *Le Voltaire* in Paris, in May 1879, to be republished as part of *Le Roman Expérimental* the following year. Mitterand observes that this first 'Lettre à la Jeunesse' « témoigne du dessein de Zola de s'ériger non seulement en critique littéraire, mais aussi en maître à penser, pour une nouvelle éducation, une nouvelle morale, et même un nouveau patriotisme ».[70]

Indeed, Zola, as he often does in this period, divides the world into poets and scientists, insisting on the superiority of the latter as representatives of a more advanced mode of thought: « les uns ont le cerveau ainsi bâti qu'ils trouvent plus large et plus sain de reprendre les antiques rêves, de voir le monde dans un affolement cérébral, dans la vision de leurs nerfs détraqués ; les autres estiment que le seul état de santé et de grandeur possible, pour un individu comme pour une nation, est de toucher enfin du doigt les réalités, d'asseoir notre intelligence et nos affaires

[70] *Ecrits sur le Roman*, p.226 (Editorial note).

humaines sur le terrain solide du vrai ».[71] The poetic temperament is pathological, those 'suffering' from it prey to their nerves and feelings; the scientific method is not only good for individual praxis, it is vital to the health of the nation. Where anti-Dreyfusards would often present the national interest in supersession of the individual's, for Zola there was no conflict: the same method and principles governed both, and both would benefit equally from their consistent application.

In addressing French youth in this 'Lettre', Zola does indeed demonstrate his desire to make a commitment to scientific rationalism widespread in society, and thereby to restore France to its pre-1870 strength: « Je m'adresse, maintenant, à la jeunesse française, je la conjure de réfléchir, avant de s'engager dans la voie de l'idéalisme ou dans la voie du naturalisme; car la grandeur de la nation, le salut de la patrie dépendent de son choix ».[72] His interventions in the polemics of naturalism and the Dreyfus Affair thus alternately stress his aloofness from the tactical nature of political or public moral discourse, and affirm the need for his thoughts to be heeded to avoid negative political and moral consequences. The tension between these two perspectives is so consistent as to be structural of Zola's polemical writing.

It is a tension endemic to the situation of literature in the early Third Republic: Pagès, in *La Bataille Littéraire*, has observed that literature was shut out of the front pages of the papers in favour of political news. Zola himself (among other writers) led a struggle to try and return literature to its erstwhile position.[73] Unable to impose the unique qualities of literature as a sole argument, in Pagès' words, « les efforts de Zola dans *Le Voltaire* se soldèrent par un échec ».[74]

---

[71] ibid., p. 228.
[72] Emile Zola, *Le Roman Expérimental* (Paris: Charpentier, 1880), p. 81.
[73] Alain Pagès, *La Bataille Littéraire*, (Paris: Séguier, 1989), pp. 77-89. At the time, essentially all French newspapers comprised a four-page format, with literary articles waiting for page 3 to make their appearance, behind political and society news, and serialized fiction, which occupied the first two pages.
[74] ibid., p. 88.

This, he argues, occurred because, « le discours critique se trouve pris entre deux concurrents redoutables : le discours politique d'une part ; la fiction d'autre part (roman ou nouvelle). »[75]

Understanding this position of enunciation helps us to understand Zola's writings on the Affair in a new light. The crisis allowed him to create a new critical discourse with the same terms as those he had used about naturalism, but with political subject-matter and, as will be shown, heavy borrowings from his own recent fiction. In other words, the Dreyfus Affair provided exactly the opportunity Zola needed to redeem his critical failure of twenty years earlier through the unique constellation of circumstances at its core. He fused the two genres Pagès identifies as having defeated him almost 20 years earlier, political speech and novelistic fiction, in order to sugar the pill of the aesthetic-moral concerns that he resurrected from the earlier polemical campaigns.

In contrast, back in 1879 in the first 'Lettre à la Jeunesse', Zola was obliged to manage the tension between politics and literature by stressing the pre-existing nature of his ideas. If the readership can be convinced that he has not invented them, their invocation can be presented not as the domineering activity of a misplaced ideologue but as the selfless voice of an intellectual tradition:

> Mon seul rôle a été celui d'un critique qui étudie son âge et qui constate, avec preuves à l'appui, dans quel sens le siècle lui semble marcher. J'ai trouvé la formule naturaliste au dix-huitième siècle; même, si l'on veut, elle part des premiers jours du monde…Quels sots se sont imaginé de me présenter comme un orgueilleux qui veut imposer sa

[75] ibid., p.89.

rhétorique, qui base sur une œuvre à lui tout le passé et tout l'avenir de la littérature française ?[76]

He also speaks of his « humble besogne ». The battle over Zola's image would return as a lynchpin of the Dreyfus Affair, heightened by the greater importance of honour to discussion of the case. Every actor of the drama, whether Zola himself, Dreyfus and his brother, or Picquart, was scrutinized as much for the way he carried himself as for his actions.

The clearest example of this came at Dreyfus' retrial in Rennes, at which much attention centred not on the evidence presented by the lawyers but on the bearing of Dreyfus, back in France after three and a half years and terribly weak from his confinement on Devil's Island. It was at this moment that the contradictions of the anti-Dreyfusards magnified, with many of those defending the army criticizing Dreyfus for being unlikeable due to his excessive military rigour; Barrès spoke of his « voix sans âme et comme une machine qui se déclanche ».[77] Zola too had, for decades, contended with caricature and critiques revolving around his person and personality. Christopher Forth, in his *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood*, has discussed the masculine iconography surrounding Zola and his body-image as it became a point of contention between Dreyfus supporters and opponents.[78]

Returning to the first 'Lettre à la Jeunesse', it is notable that Zola spends its final section directly addressing the implications of the purported struggle between idealism and naturalism

[76] *Ecrits sur le Roman,* pp.228-9.
[77] Maurice Barrès, *Scènes et Doctrines du Naturalisme*, (Paris: Plon, 1925), p. 164.
[78] Forth, *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2004), pp. 175-202. In truth, Forth provides little evidence of this specific battle over Zola's body during the Affair itself, outside of one article on Zola by the journalist Séverine and one anti-Zola caricature in *Le Grand Guignol*. His wider point - that Zola's public image had always inexorably been tied to his corpulence, which varied widely over the years based on his appetites, wealth, and diet regimes - is sounder.

on France. His stalking-horse here is Ernest Renan, whose conclusion that France's sociability[79] and wit mitigate the victory of arid German militarism comes in for severe dissent. « …Il professe là une opinion bien dangereuse pour la nation. En 1870 nous avons été battus par l'esprit scientifique…nous avons été écrasés par des masses manœuvrées avec logique…sans parler d'une artillerie plus puissante que la nôtre, d'un armement mieux approprié, d'une discipline plus grande, d'un emploi plus intelligent des voies ferrées ».[80] This is, even in 1880, a counter-attack against accusations of insufficient patriotism. On Zola's account, the idealists « nous accusent de manquer de patriotisme, nous autres naturalistes, hommes de sciences…L'école romantique a fait du patriotisme une simple question de rhétorique. Pour être patriote, il suffit dans un drame…de ramener le mot « patrie » le plus souvent possible, d'agiter des drapeaux, d'écrire des tirades sur des actes de courage ».[81] He retorts that patriotism must be a question of method rather than "musique": « le véritable patriotisme est de voir que les temps nouveaux sont venus et d'accepter la formule scientifique, au lieu de rêver je ne sais quel retour en arrière dans les bocages littéraires de l'idéal ».[82]

Increasing knowledge of the truth, for Zola, results in a greater nation. The 1879 'Lettre à la Jeunesse' thus contains three principal elements: the *captatio benevolentiae* of Zola's claims to humility and tradition, the literary advocation of naturalism as method over idealism as empty music/rhetoric, and the carrying over of that distinction into the public sphere, with scientific enquiry presented as yielding the same boons for the nation as it does for the novel:

[79] The importance of sociability to visions of French national identity can perhaps be seen most clearly in the fact that Brunetière, otherwise a fierce critic of Renan's for decades, placed equal importance on sociability in his own portraits of the French character, in literature and in society: in *Etudes Critiques sur l'Histoire de la Littérature Française* v.5 (Hachette,1911), Brunetière spoke of "la littérature française, définie et caractérisée par son esprit de sociabilité..." (p.273)
[80] Zola, *Le Roman Expérimental*, p. 83.
[81] ibid.
[82] ibid.

« nous…voulons la France savante…grandie par la culture du vrai, appliquant la formule scientifique en toute chose, en politique, comme en littérature, dans l'économie sociale comme dans l'art de la guerre. »[83] In conjunction with patriotic discourse, Zola concludes by tackling morality, operating the same distinction as for literature and patriotism. Those who trumpet it loudest often fail personally to adhere to such standards, and 'l'idéal' is used as a tool for control: « au nom de l'idéal, ils prétendent imposer silence à toute vérité trop rude qui les dérangerait; l'idéal devient une police, une défense de toucher à certains sujets, un lien qui doit garrotter le menu people pour qu'il se tienne sage. »[84]

It should be clear from the outset, and will be clearer once Zola's Dreyfus-era writings are examined, that such a text provided him with an array of topoi and tropes with which to tackle the later polemic. The principles that were already in place in Zola's thought by the late 1870s could almost have been designed for their transferability to a political crisis such as the Dreyfus Affair. That they were so apt can be seen to stem from the unavoidable political atmosphere that bathed any critical or theoretical reflection on literature in the early Third Republic. Despite his frequent claims to aloofness from, or contempt for, the political process, Zola was constantly being forced to negotiate its tendrils as he defended naturalism from its many opponents, and by the late 1890s his stance would bear more direct fruit.

The Evanescence of Science

The consistency of many of Zola's beliefs and polemical strategies over a period of decades becomes clear when articles such as this are read against those of *La Vérité en Marche*. Not only does he champion the same principles in two very different debates, one over the status of the novel and the other a treason case, he presents himself in a similar light both times, as a

[83] ibid., p. 84.
[84] ibid., p.85.

humble outsider committed principally to truth, but willing to moralize and prescribe when circumstances dictate.

What disappears between 1880 and 1898 is the scientific foundation Zola ascribes to his activity. His use of extended paraphrases from Claude Bernard's *Introduction à l'Etude de la Médecine Expérimentale* in the title essay of *Le Roman Expérimental* had been much discussed, and critiqued, from his own time through to the present.[85] On the logical level these criticisms are just; both Brunetière and Céard, with very different outlooks at the time,[86] quickly identified what Céard called the 'sophisme capital' of trying to equate characters in a novel with test subjects in a laboratory. But the appeal to science was far more a rhetorical posture than it was a deductively-derived methodology.

Outside 'Le Roman Expérimental' itself, the concept of novel-as-experiment is scarcely to be found in Zola's theoretical or polemical writing, but throughout the same period his texts, including 'Lettre à la Jeunesse', speak of the more nebulous 'esprit scientifique' as a kind of *zeitgeist* in step with which authors and the rest of society must march. Abstractions such as 'vérité' are already present in these earlier writings, but they accompany 'l'esprit scientifique' and are presented as consequences thereof. For instance, when Zola acknowledges that many young men are reluctant to pursue science and naturalism over lyricism, he states: « se mettre à la science, entrer dans le laboratoire austère du savant, quitter les rêves si doux pour de terrible vérités, cela fait trembler les collégiens échappés de la veille. »[87] This is a paternalistic stance in

[85] See Henri Mitterand, *Zola* vol.II, (Paris: Fayard, 2001), p. 504 for a discussion of Brunetière and Céard's twin objections.
[86] Céard was, in 1880, a close confidant and perhaps Zola's most significant intellectual interlocutor. Indeed, it had been Céard who loaned Zola the much-annotated copy on which the latter based 'Le Roman Expérimental' (Mitterand, *Zola* vol.II, p. 504)
[87] *Le Roman Expérimental*, p. 87.

which science and naturalism are set up as tough schools that will whip young men into shape, should they prove strong enough to learn their lessons.

And the discourse is almost exclusively masculine; no role is envisioned for women here, either in the literary sphere or in society. In the first 'Lettre à la Jeunesse' , only the noun itself is feminine, which demonstrates the separation between Zola's critical work and his fiction at this stage. Although his writings about literature were presented as explanations of a method whose results could be found in the *Rougon-Macquart* novels, the Third Republic preoccupation with virility is reflected at crucial points in his journalism, and as such his efforts to promote the values of naturalism often emphasize stereotypically masculine traits, leaning on 'virilité' itself heavily. The national discursive environment has an effect on Zola's polemics, but not (in the *Rougon-Macquart*) the novels. In the seven installments of the *Rougon-Macquart* spanning *Son Excellence Eugène Rougon* to *La Joie de Vivre* (comprising 1876-1884, or just the period in which Zola was most active in defining and promoting naturalism), only one mention of 'virilité' occurs, when a character feels emasculated in *Nana*.

In contrast, in the 400 or so pages of *Le Roman Expérimental*, those novels' contemporary, there are numerous references to 'virilité' or its derivatives. These generally appear when discussing the future of France or at least its literature, showing virility to be an essential catalyst of progress in Zola's mind. It might be objected that virility could simply be a shorthand for some form of (basically ungendered) élan vital, a popular concept in the fin-de-siècle imaginary, whether in biology, philosophy or sociology. Yet it is placed in direct opposition to women or femininity sufficiently often to confirm that the author's focus was on specifically male traits.

For example, the first 'Lettre à la Jeunesse' discusses Renan's recent admission to the Academy, with mixed feelings. Zola applauds the choice, but describes it as being tardy, because Renan's career has fallen away from the bold critical perspective with which he made his name:

> Il faut être sévère, parce que, dans nos temps d'hypocrisie et de complaisance, la sévérité seule peut rendre la nation **virile**. Sans doute l'Académie, en accueillant M. Renan, a fait un très bon choix...seulement...le vrai courage était de nommer M. Renan après son retentissant succès de la *Vie de Jésus*. Aujourd'hui, il force les portes par son charme; il ne s'assoit pas dans son fauteuil avec sa queue et ses cornes, il s'y assoit couronné par les dames.[88] (emphasis mine)

The Renan of *Prière sur l'Acropole* is an edulcorated version of the thinker who produced *La Vie de Jésus*, and has traded his horns for handmaidens; at this stage in his career, Zola was yet to consider running for the Academy himself and still took delight in imagining a whiff of brimstone in its halls.[89] He links both naturalism/scientism and Dreyfusism with bravery, and their opponents with conformism and cowardice.[90] That conformism is sanctioned by women, who are associated with the comforts Zola rejects. At the height of the Affair itself, Zola would be praised by others for injecting virility into the French body politic through his engagement. When the Dreyfusard journal *La Critique* collected the opinions of contributors on the crisis, Manuel Devaldès, editor of *Le Libre*, wrote that "Emile Zola, dont l'œuvre virile arde magnifiquement vers la Vérité, vient de montrer aux mufles et aux dégénérés qu'un sang pur flue

[88] ibid., p. 74.
[89] He would eventually apply 19 times, always unsuccessfully and, in the later years, purely as a formality (Mitterand, *Zola* vol.II, p. 979).
[90] When praising Scheurer-Kestner in his first article on the Affair, Zola singles out his « mâles vertus de la loyauté, de la franchise et du courage civique. » (*La Vérité en Marche*, p. 45) This also affirms that virility had remained a valorized topos in his thought.

encore en ses artères..."[91] Virile truth was not Zola's sole preserve, and the example of his action for Dreyfus led to imitation of his rhetoric as well as his engagement.

Returning to Zola's naturalist polemics, it is clear that they are substantially different from the novels they defend. In *L'Assommoir*, the picture is almost the opposite; Gervaise Macquart's life of honest toil is fatally undermined by the cynical and dissolute men in it. In both *Au Bonheur des Dames* and *La Joie de Vivre*, the central female characters (Denise Baudu and Pauline Quenu respectively) provide the moral compass their lovers lack, and other novels feature similar structures. The difference lies in the scope of the writing; above, Zola's ostensible subject is Renan but his comments actually address public morality in France, in sweeping fashion.

In the *Rougon-Macquart*, on the other hand, each work treats a particular environment and its people. *Au Bonheur des Dames* discusses the social Darwinism and collective neuroses implicit in the rise of the department store, and *La Joie de Vivre*, a title often read ironically due to the almost unremitting bleakness of its plot, is nevertheless a sincere attempt to refute the Schopenhauerism in vogue among French youths at the time.[92] The author's sympathy for individual female characters dissipates when society as a whole becomes the subject. In *La Vérité en Marche*, the titular noun would become a character in her own right and receive perhaps the author's most sympathetic treatment of all. He calls it "cette pauvre vérité, nue et frissonnante, huée par tous, que tous semblaient avoir intérêt à étrangler."[93]

The Dreyfus Affair thus drives Zola to renew the sympathy for feminine plights evident in his major novels, but in a broader, more allegorical and politicized context. Even in apparently

[91] *La Critique* 4:71 (February 5th 1898), p. 27.
[92] See Rene-Pierre Colin, *Schopenhauer en France: Un Mythe Naturaliste*, (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1979), pp. 138-45.
[93] *La Vérité en Marche*, p.7.

tangential areas such as the rhetorical treatment of women, parallels and consistency can be found from the high naturalist period to that of the Dreyfus Affair. Truth, in *La Vérité en Marche*, becomes the latest in a long line of oppressed or disadvantaged female characters in Zola's writing, and he appeals to pathos in her name still more clearly than had been the case in fiction. On the other side of that coin, abstract virility remains an ideal in the Dreyfus articles, as it had been in the defence of naturalism.

Zola may have been ambiguous towards women, but his embrace of science was almost constant. As early as 1868, in the preface to the second edition of *Thérèse Raquin*, he was claiming that « mon but a été un but scientifique avant tout. » Not only did this set the pattern for future appeals to science, it also established the conditions in which the appeals would be made: the second edition received such a preface because of the baleful reactions the first had provoked. Science is a source of authority rather than method, and will continue to be deployed as such until the very end of Zola's career.

For example, *Paris*, the novel he had just completed when he became a Dreyfusard and whose publication in volume would be delayed until March 1898, after its author's trial, opens with its protagonist Pierre Froment ruing his failures in *Rome*, the preceding volume of the *Trois Villes* triptych. "S'être imaginé que la science actuelle, en lui, allait s'accommoder avec la foi de l'an mille, et surtout avoir eu la sottise d'espérer que lui, petit prêtre, allait faire la leçon au pape..."[94] The struggle between science and faith structured the cycle and Zola's last novel series, the *Quatre Evangiles*, would continue to promote science's role in society, notably in *Travail*, the utopian tale of a factory transformed by the application of Fourierist social theory. Despite the transience of 'Le Roman Expérimental' itself, then, science is a constant guarantor for naturalism

[94] Emile Zola, *Paris* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1898), p. 8.

from the 1860s onwards: and yet, some philological work on *La Verité en Marche* reveals the extent of Zola's move away from science as a rhetorical foundation for truth in the Dreyfus Affair.

Let us first clarify the nature of the volume. Published in 1901 after the second Dreyfus Affair, the one in which Zola was personally implicated, had been extinguished by the amnesty law voted in parliament, *La Vérité en Marche* collects all 13 articles Zola wrote about the Affair in chronological order. These begin with 'M. Scheurer-Kestner', a tribute to the Senate vice-president who had convinced Zola to join the fight on the Dreyfusard side.[95] The final one, dating from December 1900, was a self-conscious (and vain) plea to president Loubet to block the amnesty law. Zola also added to the volume the four articles he wrote defending his father's legacy against the claims of Ernest Judet, editor of *Le Petit Journal*. 'J'Accuse!...', by the far the best-known and most potent of the texts, was the sixth to be written.

La Vérité en Marche takes its retroactive name from the conclusion of 'M. Scheurer-Kestner', in which Zola asserted that « la vérité est en marche, et rien ne l'arrêtera. » His first three salvoes had appeared in *Le Figaro*, as a result of Zola's familiarity with Fernand de Rodays, the paper's editor. However, de Rodays was forced to abandon the publication of Zola's campaign, despite personal Dreyfusard sentiments, when his predominantly conservative subscribers began cancelling en masse in protest. Zola published his next two pieces in pamphlet form, before finding a permanent home at *L'Aurore*, the recently-founded Radical newspaper under the auspices of Ernest Vaughan and Georges Clemenceau.

[95] Scheurer-Kestner was the first public figure without a direct connection to the Dreyfus family to advocate for Alfred's retrial. A respected Alsatian statesman who attempted to use his moral authority to sway both parliamentary and public opinion to the Dreyfusards, he met with abuse from both quarters for his positions, and indeed Zola's second 'Lettre à la Jeunesse' was inspired by Scheurer-Kestner's heckling at the hands of nationalist students. In a sad irony, Scheurer-Kestner died of cancer the same day that Dreyfus was pardoned after the Rennes trial.

A comparative quantitative analysis of *Le Roman Expérimental* and *La Vérité en Marche* is immediately revealing of the changed rhetorical focus between the two. In the former, the term 'science' occurs 189 times: while many of these, as one might expect, are contained in the eponymous essay, over half appear in the other essays. In contrast, in *La Vérité en Marche* 'science' itself appears only eight times in over 200 pages.

Tellingly, two of these instances come towards the beginning and the end of the second 'Lettre à la Jeunesse'. Neither is central to the point of the article, which is to lament that crowds of nationalist students had verbally abused Scheurer-Kestner. Both uses of 'science' in the 'Lettre' are counterfactual, employed to suggest to the youth addressed by Zola what they should be doing with their energy instead of barracking the statesman. « Allez-vous, pour affirmer la tolérance, l'indépendance de la race humaine, siffler quelque sectaire de l'intelligence, à la cervelle étroite, qui aura voulu ramener vos esprits libérés à l'erreur ancienne, en proclamant la banqueroute de la science ? »[96]

Catcalls, Zola rather dubiously suggests, are fine, so long as their object speaks against science rather than for Dreyfus. In a similar vein, he later evokes « les fondements mêmes de ce vaste édifice de la science que tu dois continuer à bâtir pour ton honneur et pour ton bonheur. »[97] This harks more closely back to the earlier text of the same name, yet it comes in the article's *peroratio*, underlining its marginality in the argument.

It can also be noted that the use of 'la banqueroute de la science' strongly suggests which unnamed alternative target for student abuse Zola has in mind; Ferdinand Brunetière. The periphrasis fits with Zola's attitude towards Brunetière throughout his career, which was to avoid direct conflict. The reasons for this, because of his silence and the lack of testimony on the

[96] Zola, *La Vérité en Marche*, pp. 39-40.
[97] ibid., p. 49.

subject, can only be guessed at. It was highly unusual for Zola not to respond to attacks either literary or personal; as mentioned, the Dreyfus Affair amnesty law put paid to two different lawsuits he had brought against opponents in the controversy. In the literary domain, Zola personally responded by letter to Ulbach's 1867 article on 'La Littérature Putride', and would do likewise with other opponents many times in the decades that followed. Yet in the case of Brunetière, even in Zola's voluminous correspondence, which runs to 10 volumes, his name is mentioned a single time. And this is in reference not to naturalism, or to the Dreyfus Affair, but to a squabble over an Academy election of 1892 in which they were both candidates: the letter is not addressed to Brunetière himself.[98]

So why not Brunetière, probably his most consistent antagonist? It may be that the *Revue des Deux Mondes* man struck too close to home with his critiques and left Zola without an effective means of responding. Brunetière tended to take Zola's claims seriously and unpick them piecemeal, rather than vociferously denouncing a general immorality in his novels as others often did. Zola was far more comfortable responding to claims of turpitude than to charges that, for instance, Flaubert or Daudet were 'truer' naturalists than him. Since Zola himself devoted lengthy studies to both authors, he could not have responded by disavowing their quality or kinship with his writing, and perhaps this is why he chose to sidestep Brunetière's challenges.

In ‘J’Accuse…!’ itself, ‘science’ does figure, but only once and in a context that underlines its subordination to Zola’s two newer guiding concepts in *La Vérité en Marche*: ‘vérité’ itself, and its cousin ‘justice’. Remarkably, these terms both appear 171 times in the

[98] Emile Zola, *Correspondance* v. VII (Montreal: PU Montreal/Eds. du CNRS, 1989), p. 323. Brunetière had accused Zola of spreading rumours about Baudelaire as part of a scheme to harm Brunetière's prospects of election; the great ideological strife of the Affair was partly fuelled by such petty rivalries.

collected articles.[99] Although, in many of these instances, the two terms are conjoined, this is by no means universal and the equal tallies underline their twin significance to the author's rhetoric. In 'J'Accuse…!', he presents them as the goals toward which science is straining: "C'est un crime que d'exploiter le patriotisme pour des œuvres de haine, et c'est un crime, enfin, que de faire du sabre le dieu moderne, lorsque toute la science humaine est au travail pour l'œuvre prochaine de vérité et de justice."[100] Specific reference to figures such as Claude Bernard, or to concrete benefits, has been replaced by a general 'science humaine'. The addition of 'humaine' also serves to soften the concept into something more anthropocentric and steers it back towards the original meaning of *scientia*; a body of organized knowledge, but not one necessarily concerning the natural world or built on a positivist method.

The overwhelming frequency with which truth and justice appear without any mention of science makes their divorce abundantly clear. In other words, Zola's assertion that truth is primordial remains strong over the course of his career (or increases), but his desire to underpin that primacy with appeals to scientific method all but vanishes during the Dreyfus Affair. Remarkably, 'Vérité' had featured 171 times in *Le Roman Expérimental*, an exact match with its frequency (and, as observed, that of 'justice') in *La Vérité en Marche*. Zola only used 'justice', perhaps understandably given the non-judicial subject matter of the essays, a total of 14 times in the earlier volume. The net result of the count is, then, that truth stays absolutely constant in its appearances, science all but disappears, and its place is taken by justice (see Table I, p.283).

[99] Excluding the 'Mon Père' articles and the brief introductions added to each text.
[100] *La Vérité en Marche*, p.89.

What has caused the elision of such a previously vital part - science and all its connotations - of Zola's polemics?[101] Much of the answer may lie in the shifting intellectual climate in France over the final 20 years of the nineteenth century, combined with the author's differing rhetorical goals in the two moments. In 1880, with the consolidation of the Third Republic's power in genuinely Republican hands (and the broadly positivist mindset that was thence applied to government and particularly education in consequence, with Kant becoming almost the state's official philosopher), along with the lauding of men like Bernard and Pasteur as national heroes of a different order to the defeated generals of 1870, science appeared to be rather uncontroversially positive in the public sphere.[102] In addition, when Zola was defending the naturalist school rather than Dreyfus, his need to convince the population as a whole of his perspective was much less. The point was not to unify the country in enthusiasm for naturalism (even Zola could not have hoped for such an outcome), but to bring a large enough proportion of hostile or sceptical readers into the fold to ensure lasting success.

The Psychology of Bankruptcy

Over the course of 1890s, however, 'science' became a much more politically loaded concept, with parallels to the fate undergone by 'climate change' in the early years of the twenty-first century. It became a wedge issue between republicans and/or free-thinkers, who commonly viewed science as a replacement for religion in guiding moral discourse and ensuring the health of the body politic through progress, and conservatives, particularly Catholics, who often argued for science's amorality and its destructive effect on national traditions and social harmony. The

[101] The rise of justice seems, *prima facie*, much simpler to account for; the injustice suffered by Alfred Dreyfus was at the centre of most Dreyfusard arguments and Zola, like his allies, needed to keep it prominent in order to justify the turmoil to which his writings were contributing. Yet, as I will go on to argue, justice was already on the rise before the Affair itself in Zola's writing.

[102] See Venita Datta, *Heroes and Legends of Fin-de-Siècle France,* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011), pp. 10-11.

publication of Paul Bourget's *Le Disciple*, in 1889, had provided a focal point for the increasingly heated struggle between positivists and idealists, with its suggestion that Tainean positivism opened the door to immorality and undermined the foundation for human relations. The historian Harry Paul observes that in certain quarters "it was becoming fashionable to speak of the bankruptcy of science."[103]

The emblematic exchange in this debate occurred in 1895, between the eminent chemist Marcelin Berthelot on the one hand and Brunetière on the other. Brunetière's unexpected article 'Après une Visite au Vatican',[104] appearing in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in January, praised Leo XIII's policies, and advocated a shared effort by social moralists and the church, enumerating the failures of science to tell man anything about himself outside the animal realm. Berthelot shot back by denying that there was any mystery left in the world, and (much like Zola had in 1880) suggesting that those who gave in to idealism ran the risk of moral and intellectual perdition through ignorance. The chemist denounced the reliance of religious discourse on revelation and unverified absolutes, and instead sited morality inside human conscience, which fell within the boundaries of science.[105]

With this background to *La Vérité en Marche*, the question becomes whether the eclipse of science in Zola's writing there was a strategic choice, rather than a symptom of his own loss of faith in science's ability to explain the world or strengthen society. This is not the place to attempt a full analysis of the ideological differences between the *Rougon-Macquart*s and the *Villes* and *Evangiles* which comprised his novelistic activity by the time of the Affair. But they do have relevance insofar as they provide evidence that the author was still concerned with

[103] 'The Debate over the Bankruptcy of Science in 1895', *French Historical Studies* 5:3 (Spring 1968), p. 302.
[104] A Brunetière article beginning with 'Après' tended to signal big ideas and certain controversy.
[105] Marcellin Berthelot, 'La Science et la Morale', *Revue de Paris* (Feb. 1, 1895), pp. 449-69.

showing science's vitality to a thriving society: even if the novels became gradually more infused with Zola's particular brand of mysticism, one salient feature of that mysticism is its marriage of a messianic tone with continued appeals to technology and rationalism.

Yet as soon as Zola began writing about the Dreyfus Affair, his presentation of the writer's art saw a shift. In 'M. Scheurer-Kestner' he declares that "ce qui s'est passé chez cet homme est un extraordinaire spectacle, qui m'enthousiasme, moi dont le métier est de me pencher sur les consciences."[106] This would be an unremarkable statement on the part of many authors, but when Zola writes it he places himself at odds with his younger self. In 'Le Roman Expérimental', Zola makes a rare break in his approving, lengthy commentary of passages from Claude Bernard to disagree with the physiologist. "Je n'accepte pas les paroles suivantes de Claude Bernard : "Pour les arts et les lettres, la personnalité domine tout. Il s'agit là d'une création spontanée de l'esprit...""[107] Instead, Zola attempts to be more scientistic than the scientist whom he takes as his model: "Nous opérons comme lui sur l'homme, car tout faire croire, et Claude Bernard le reconnaît lui-même, que les phénomènes cérébraux peuvent être déterminés comme les autres phénomènes."[108]

The difference between the late 1870s and the late 1890s is that, in the former, Zola denies any specificity to literature (or at least, naturalist literature: throughout the article, 'les romanciers idéalistes' are antagonists whose practices he contrasts with the power of Bernard's). He and his fellow naturalists study man with the same goals and methods as experimental medicine. In fact, little of this well-known but less well-read article discusses the novel as experiment. Instead the wider philosophy, as it appears in passages like the above, is of a kind of

[106] *La Vérité en Marche*, p. 5.
[107] *Le Roman Expérimental*, p. 48.
[108] ibid., p. 48.

intellectual ecumenism, in which science and literature aim to reach the same truths by roughly similar approaches. Zola's argument is frequently speculative, not asserting that naturalism is already a science, but inductively claiming that, since medicine itself has recently moved from art to science, the same can soon be true of literature.

'M. Scheurer-Kestner' displays a different conception. Now, far from placing cerebral activity on par with physiological function, the author demarcates his work as « me pencher sur les consciences »; his particular interest is foregrounded, and literature no longer integrates its findings into a wider project. What is more, the replacement of 'les phénomènes cérébraux' with 'les consciences' steers the portrayal of the mind away from the organic and towards the spiritual. He reiterates the idea at the conclusion of the text, musing that « J'imagine que, dans le hautain silence de M. Scheurer-Kestner, il y a eu aussi le désir d'attendre que chacun fît son examen de conscience, avant d'agir. »[109] The distance travelled between these words and those of *Le Roman Expérimental* can be measured by the fact that, in that earlier volume, 'conscience' only figures four times. Twice it is part of the phrase 'être conscient de', once it is used in a citation from the critic Charles Bigot, with whom Zola is vehemently disagreeing, and the last is applied to Bigot by the author himself. In other words, never once Zola did use 'conscience' as a noun to describe the human mind or the novelist's work.

La Vérité en Marche, in stark contrast, incorporates it 48 times, all but one of them in the conceptual sense. Zola follows through on his claims to professional dominion over consciences on two further occasions in the articles succeeding 'M. Scheurer-Kestner'. In 'J'Accuse!...', he muses on the thought process of General Billot, then Minister of War, when Picquart brought him the evidence of Esterhazy's authorship of the bordereau: « Il dut y avoir là une minute

[109] *La Vérité en Marche*, p. 10.

psychologique pleine d'angoisse...il pouvait faire la vérité. Il n'osa pas, dans la terreur sans doute de l'opinion publique...Puis, ce ne fut là qu'une minute de combat entre sa conscience et ce qu'il croyait être l'intérêt militaire. Quand cette minute fut passée, il était déjà trop tard. »[110]

In 'Lettre à M. Brisson', he apostrophizes France's new prime minister, asking « comment avez-vous pu écouter sans frémir les affirmations passionnées de votre ministre de la guerre ? Quel drame, à cette minute, s'est passé dans votre conscience ? En êtes-vous à croire que la politique prime tout, qu'il vous est permis de mentir, pour assurer au pays le salut que votre ministère, selon vous, lui porte ?..Ah ! Que je voudrais lire en vous, et que ce qui se passe là doit être intéressant, pour un psychologue ! »[111] This last excerpt departs slightly from the formula, since Zola ultimately affirms his inability to penetrate Brisson's mind, and leaves the job to psychologists. Here again, a difference is found with *Le Roman Expérimental*, since even that domain the author has been claiming as his must, at times, be left to other experts.

By 1897, instead of a canvas of ordinary French people's minds in synergy with their environments, their thoughts determined by temperament and surroundings, the private spiritual discipline of the examination of conscience (favoured by Ignatius of Loyola) is the horizon of the Dreyfus Affair as Zola involves himself in it. The Jesuit allusion is not a coincidence; with the army's General Staff under suspicion of wrongdoing, critics took the opportunity to attack the Catholic order through the officers who had been, in many cases, their pupils when younger.[112] Not for the last time, Zola argues on his opponents' territory, attempting to reinvest 'examen de conscience' with a secular meaning that will, in theory, permit the resolution of the crisis. At the same time, he may be conceding that the public is intensely interested in psychology and expects

[110] ibid., p. 82.
[111] ibid., p. 118.
[112] See Ruth Harris, *Dreyfus: Politics, Emotion and the Scandal of the Century* (Macmillan, 2010), pp. 263 and 333, for example.

it of its authors. Between the publication of *Le Roman Expérimental* and the Dreyfus Affair, Paul Bourget (once an admirer of Zola's and closely linked to the Médan group) had made his name with the *Essais de Psychologie Contemporaine* in 1883, and the critical focus had moved towards greater enthusiasm for such approaches. Zola's *captatio benevolentiae,* particularly salient here in his first attempt to comment on the Affair, is redolent of the changes catalyzed by Bourget and others of a similar mind.

Quantifying 'Science'

The early appearance of 'science' and its consubstantiality with Pierre Froment in *Paris* has already been mentioned. This is not a passing reference; there are 60 further in the novel, along with 8 uses of 'sciences', 3 of 'scientifique' and 2 of 'scientifiquement'. Since *Paris* was written immediately before Zola's conversion to Dreyfusism by Scheurer-Kestner, the frequency shows that the dropoff of the same terms in *La Vérité en Marche* does not emanate from a longterm ideological shift. In contrast, Zola's next novel, *Fécondité*, the beginning of a new cycle of four novels and composed during his English exile of 1898-99, contains only 11 uses of 'science' despite its greater length.[113] The frequency of the terms falls by 88% between the two novels.[114] The author's sympathy for science has not vanished for all that: in its first appearance, he places it in the mouths of a gloomy literary group which, according to the narrator, professes « la haine de la vie, la passion du néant. »[115]

In a long passage written in collective free indirect style, in which several of these characters' words are melded without individual attribution of any phrase, it is exclaimed «

[113] The *Evangiles* were foreclosed by Zola's death in 1902, only the first three - *Fécondité*, *Travail* and *Vérité* - were completed, with *Justice* left as no more than a set of newspaper cuttings.
[114] In other words, how often 'science' or one its closest cousins is used in a given number of words in the text. In the table below and those which will follow, this number is set at 100,000 to ensure one- and two-digit results.
[115] Emile Zola, *Fécondité* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1899), p. 52.

quelle chute, cette fin de notre siècle actuel, qui s'achève dans la banqueroute de la science, de la liberté et de la justice, qui tombe dans le sang et dans la boue, au seuil même de l'inconnu menaçant du siècle futur! »[116] By virtue of their despondency and the argument with the protagonist, Mathieu Froment, which provides the context for the above tirade, we can understand them to be the opposite of the gospel Zola is trying to preach in *Fécondité*. Optimism, however hard-won, about the future is a structural theme in all three completed *Evangiles* and, in this novel, provides the intellectual antidote to the decreased birthrate against which the author is proselytizing.

What is immediately striking, in light of the fact that the composition of *Fécondité* was a sort of interlude in the writing of what would become *La Vérité en Marche*,[117] is that 'science' is shadowed by 'vérité' and 'justice' as soon as it appears in the novel. This points to a knock-on effect, from Zola's polemical writing onto his aesthetic choices. Thematically, the grounds for discussing scientific topics in *Fécondité* were just as strong as in *Paris*; while the latter had explored the tension between faith and positivism in its title city as the end of the century approached, the *Evangiles* dealt with a different theme in each installment, speculating on the future of France as it moved into the 20th century. It has been pointed out that a work like *Travail* can be considered science fiction, as its narrative end date, relative to composition, is well into the future when inferred from characters' ages and other allusions, and it discusses technologies not current in 1901.[118]

---

[116] ibid., p. 51.
[117] Zola wrote no public commentaries on the Affair while in London, conceding to his friends and allies that any words from exile would only cloud the public's view of their cause.
[118] Thierry Paquot, in a debate about utopia at the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, commented that "*Travail* est le seul roman de science fiction, d'anticipation de Zola." http://www.cite-sciences.fr/francais/web_cite/informer/tec_met/travail/texte-sep/010426a.htm. Retrieved 04/18/2013.

And yet, Zola chose to curtail his references to science in his last novel cycle, compared to its predecessor. *Travail*, thanks to its subject-matter, did see a resurgence in appeals to the term, but their frequency remains well below half what it had been in *Paris*, and very similar to that found in *La Vérité en Marche*. Notably, where *Fécondité*'s very first mention of 'science' spliced it with 'vérité' and 'justice', the same is true of its second appearance in *Travail*. The character being relayed in indirect style is Jordan, an industrialist and inventor whose work is put into socially beneficial form by his friend Luc Froment, the protagonist (and brother of Mathieu from *Fécondité*). « Selon lui, c'était uniquement la science qui menait l'humanité à la vérité, à la justice, au bonheur final, à cette cité parfaite de l'avenir, vers laquelle les peuples se dirigent d'un train si lent et si plein d'angoisse. »[119] This hopeful view in fact shows science's subordination to social justice in the text as a whole, since Jordan is portrayed as slightly out of touch, viewing the world « du haut de l'absolu où il vivait »: his faith in science alone, unchannelled and unguided, is overwrought. The use of 'absolu' may have been a reference to Balzac's *La Recherche de l'Absolu*, whose monomaniacal and profligate Balthasar Claës is hardly a model of wisdom.

It falls to Luc, the social theorist, to care adequately for Jordan's workers, and his success leads, by the end of the novel, to a utopian society founded on electrical machines. Concurrently, after one final cataclysm that foreshadows the two world conflicts Zola would not live to see, mankind has agreed the abolition of war: « la guerre n'était plus possible, avec la toute-puissance de la science, souveraine faiseuse de vie, et non de mort. »[120] Jordan, then, does not represent his creator's views. Science will not, for the Zola of 1901, guarantee truth and justice by itself; social struggle and the horrors of war will first intercede to avert men from its misuse. This is a distinctly different vision from the one espoused over 20 years earlier in 'Lettre à la Jeunesse',

[119] Emile Zola, *Travail* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1901), p. 144.
[120] ibid., p. 665.

whereby French youth would gain ethically and materially from the simple embrace of science. The political strife of the Dreyfus Affair has left its mark, resulting in an author who, even as he writes visionary futuristic narratives, recognizes the need for mediation and political decision-making in the transformation of society.

In *Vérité*, Zola's last completed work and an allegorical retelling of the Dreyfus Affair, Marc Froment, yet another member of the family, is a small-town schoolteacher who sees his Jewish colleague Simon falsely convicted of child murder. But the teaching profession proves more significant than the miscarriage of justice; as Henri Mitterand has argued,[121] Zola pivots away from the allegory and concerns himself more closely with the tug-of-war between secularists and Catholics over France's educational system. The 1901 law governing associations on French soil had, as one of its most significant effects, the drastic reduction of educational provision on the part of religious congregations such as the Jesuits.[122]

Here again, the thematics are conducive to mentions of science, if slightly less so than in *Travail*, and so it proves, with 28 instances and a frequency that sits between those of its two predecessors. And, as he did in those novels, Zola uses 'science' in conjunction with 'vérité' and 'justice', at the first time of asking. Marc Froment's mentor, Salvan, is being described along with his vision for France's educational future: « [Il] n'avait plus eu qu'une mission, lorsqu'on lui avait donné la direction de l'Ecole normale : préparer de bons instituteurs, acquis à la science expérimentale, libérés de Rome, enseignant enfin la vérité au peuple et le faisant capable de

[121] « *Vérité* s'inspirera de l'Affaire, à chaud, mais l'Affaire n'en sera pas le motif central...[Celui-ci est] la bataille politique et idéologique qui se livre...entre laïcs et cléricaux, et...une réflexion plus générale sur le savoir et l'instruction. » *Zola* vol.III, p. 727.
[122] Ton van der Eyden, *Public Management of Society*, (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2003), p. 274.

liberté, de justice et de paix. Tout l'avenir national et humain était là. »[123] 'Liberté' and 'paix' join the other two terms to complete a more expansive picture of Salvan and Zola's vision for France.

There are thus two lasting consequences to Zola's Dreyfusard campaign in his fiction; science is less commonly invoked, and it is clearly buttressed by the truth and justice the author claims as its corollaries. Even *Lourdes* and *Rome*, novels in which faith is more substantially discussed than science, still appeal to the latter textually much more often than the *Evangiles* do. For Zola, more clearly than for the authors who will be studied in the succeeding chapters, we can determine not only how his Dreyfus-era discourse drew on earlier aesthetic ideas, but how his later literary approach was in turn impacted by the crisis. This alludes to the dialectical approach outlined in the Introduction; in a body of work such as Zola's, we are able to track the shifts back and forth between the aesthetic and political realms as we move from the period of high naturalism to the Affair, and then on to the *Quatre Evangiles*.

Polemics and Fiction Entwined

This leaves unanswered, however, the question of where truth and justice came from in Zola's writing. We have seen that he already used 'vérité' assiduously in *Le Roman Expérimental*; yet the novels contemporary to those polemics do not feature it equally. This has changed by the post-*Rougon-Macquart* cycles, and merits its own analysis. It may not be surprising to see 'vérité' once again feature heavily when Zola writes about the Dreyfus Affair, but can we explain why he also starts to use it more in the novels he writes around that time? It is not enough to appeal to a contagious model, in which the polemics simply rub off on the fiction; such an effect would also have had to occur around 1880 to be a valid explanation.

[123] Emile Zola, *Vérité* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1903), p. 74.

Let us first establish the numbers before accounting for them. Tables III and IV (pp.284, 285) describe Zola novels from the late 1870s-early 1880s, as well as from the 1890s-early 1900s. The former describes the uses of 'vérité' in the texts, while the latter enumerate those of 'justice'. Only 'conceptual' meanings for each term have been counted; in other words, when 'vérité' appears in, for instance, the expression 'en vérité', or when the context has it refer to a specific truth rather than Truth itself or something approaching it, the reference is ignored. The same applies (although, in practice, less often) to 'justice' and its incidence, with (for instance) 'la justice' as it refers to the police/legal system irrelevant here. As was the case for 'science', all novels from *Lourdes* on have been included. Among the *Rougon-Macquart*s, the four instalments spanning *L'Assommoir* to *Pot-Bouille* (with *Une Page D'Amour* and *Nana* in between) are included. The writing of the first three, between 1876 and the beginning of 1880, coincides with the period in which Zola was writing the pieces that Charpentier would combine and issue as *Le Roman Expérimental* in 1880. *Pot-Bouille* is included to track any lasting effects of the polemics on the novels.

The results are clear: 'vérité' is essentially non-existent in the middle years of the *Rougon-Macquart*s, with a solitary mention in *Pot-Bouille* as a priest's crisis of faith is briefly alluded to. This has changed drastically by the late novels. Even excluding idiomatic phrases and particular truths, four of the six feature the term dozens of times. *Vérité* itself outpaces any of the others by a factor of 3 (the title appears to bleed into and saturate the text), but this should not obscure the preponderance truth also holds in *Rome*, *Paris*, and *Travail*.

We are left with two titles, the first in their respective cycles, which do not fit the pattern. The reasons for this, I will argue, are different for *Lourdes* than they are for *Fécondité*. Both

novels contain 'vérité' less than 1/3 as often as any other post-*Rougon-Macquart* title. Let us start with *Fécondité*.

What's the Matter with *Fécondité*?

In *Fécondité*, the dropoff in 'vérité' mirrors the evanescence of 'science'. Compared to *Paris*, science diminishes by 88%, truth by over 79%, only for both to increase at least threefold in *Travail*. It seems, then, that in the one novel Zola wrote during the Dreyfus Affair proper, he was comparatively reluctant to use his most common watchwords. The reasons for this can only be speculated on, since (unsurprisingly) no overt declaration on the subject is available. Zola was imposing silence on himself while in England, aware that any published word of his from exile would be scorned by most of his compatriots.[124] As he put it in the *incipit* of 'Justice', the article in *L'Aurore* with which he announced his return:

> Depuis onze mois bientôt, j'ai quitté la France. Pendant onze mois, je me suis imposé l'exil le plus total, la retraite la plus ignorée, le silence le plus absolu. J'étais comme le mort volontaire, couché au secret tombeau, dans l'attente de la vérité et de la justice. Et aujourd'hui, la vérité ayant vaincu, la justice régnant enfin, je renais, je rentre et reprends ma place sur la terre française.[125]

Being cut off from the combative environment raging in Paris had consequences for Zola's fiction. The only novel he ever wrote abroad lacks the polemical terms that pepper its contemporaries. The metaphoric death to which the author alludes above also afflicted science

[124] Zola's flight from Paris was portrayed as cowardly and self-serving, most memorably in a cartoon which rewrote the author's catchphrase as 'La Vérité en Fuite'.
[125] *La Vérité en Marche*, p. 129. Zola's overoptimistic assessment of the state of play comes from the fact that the Cour de Cassation had just ordered a retrial in Dreyfus' case. The pendulum seemed to have swung decisively towards the Dreyfusards - only to be halted for a time by the result of the Rennes trial.

and truth in *Fécondité*: not only was he waiting for the return of truth and justice in France, but he was waiting to use them again in novels.

Further evidence that the author's distancing from the literary frontlines was responsible for the differences evident in *Fécondité* comes in the form of the article 'Le Crapaud', written in 1896 and incorporated into *Nouvelle Campagne*, the volume that showcased the year-long 'new campaign' Zola had led in the opinion section of *Le Figaro* at that time.[126] 'Le Crapaud' is a playful piece that reveals much about its author through the conceit of the titular toad. Zola claims to advise young authors seeking his counsel to swallow a toad every morning in order to steel themselves for the struggles of the literary life, and assiduously to follow his own advice:

> Moi, voici trente ans que, tous les matins, avant de me mettre au travail, j'avale mon crapaud, en ouvrant les sept ou huit journaux qui m'attendent, sur ma table. Je suis sûr qu'il y est...Attaque grossière, légende injurieuse, bordée de sottises ou de mensonges, le crapaud s'y étale, dans ce journal-ci, quand il n'est pas dans ce journal-là. Et je l'avale, complaisamment...
>
> Les choses en sont même arrivées au point que, si je n'avais pas mon crapaud, le matin, il me manquerait...
>
> Jamais je ne travaille mieux que lorsqu'il est plus particulièrement hideux et qu'il sue davantage le poison. Un vrai coup de fouet dans tout mon être cérébral...je lui dois certainement la flamme des meilleures pages que j'ai écrites.[127]

[126] This was the same *Campagne* in which he had written the prescient article 'Pour les Juifs'. It marked Zola's return to regular journalism after an absence of almost 15 years in which he had concentrated on his novels. In this respect also, the Dreyfus Affair came at a time when Zola was primed to intervene in it.
[127] Emile Zola, *Nouvelle Campagne* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1896), pp. 69-70.

Leaving aside the question of quality that Zola raises, the truth of his claims to be inspired by the 'toad' can be measured rhetorically by his temporary failure to reproduce in *Fécondité* the terms dearest to him in the 1890s/early 1900s. Not having access to the newspapers in which those amphibians dwelt seems indeed to have had the effect Zola had predicted two years earlier: he had also commented there that reading his reviews taught him « l'amour de la vérité et de la justice. » Without these, an author may as well be deceased: « la vraie mort littéraire commence au silence qui se fait sur les œuvres et sur l'homme. »[128]

Zola's exile, which he described as a voluntary death, takes on further significance in this context. It underlines the fact that, in the final decade of his career, the line between polemical writing and the novel had drastically eroded: beyond using the same watchwords in both genres, when he was deprived of the chance to write or even read polemically, he also wrote his fiction differently. This illustrates how the aesthetical-political relationship can also operate over much shorter timeframes than the decades primarily studied here; local effects such as those seen in *Fécondité* can emerge from the particular features of a crisis, unnoticed by those experiencing them.

Truth, Justice and the Roman Way

This does not explain why *Lourdes*, written and published entirely in France before even the first Dreyfus Affair of late 1894, is similarly bereft of appeals to 'vérité'. Zola appears only to have discovered a taste for using the term in his novels with *Rome*, even though 'science' was already prevalent in *Lourdes*. Can anything about *Rome* explain why truth, such a vital concept in non-fiction for its author as far back as the 1870s, suddenly irrupted into his novels? It is true that, in 1895 when Zola was composing the second of the *Villes*, Dreyfus had been convicted and

[128] ibid., p. 77.

exiled, but he took little interest in these events at the time and was not in the country when they began, rather in Rome itself researching his new work.[129] Zola would not become genuinely interested in Alfred Dreyfus until November 1897.

The solution can, however, be found in the pages of the novel, specifically a passage in which Pierre Froment visits Saint Peter's and views the popes' funeral statuary:

> Alors, tout d'un coup, Pierre, sous une illumination brusque, vit la **vérité** éclater et se résumer en lui, au moment où, pour la seconde fois, il faisait le tour de l'immense basilique, en admirant les tombeaux des papes... Ah! ces tombeaux des papes, à Saint-Pierre, dans leur insolente glorification, dans leur énormité charnelle et luxueuse, défiant la mort, mettant sur cette terre l'immortalité ! Ce sont des papes de bronze, démesurés, ce sont des figures allégoriques, des anges équivoques, beaux comme des belles filles, des femmes désirables, avec des hanches et des gorges de déesses...A genoux, Alexandre VII, assisté de la Prudence et de la Justice, a devant lui la Charité et la **Vérité** et un squelette se lève, montrant le sablier vide...
>
> Et Pierre passait de l'un à l'autre, continuait de marcher au travers de la basilique ensoleillée, superbe et déserte. Oui, ces tombeaux, d'une impériale ostentation, rejoignaient ceux de la voie Appienne. C'était Rome sûrement, la terre de Rome, cette terre où l'orgueil et la domination poussaient comme l'herbe des champs, qui avait fait de l'humble christianisme primitif le catholicisme victorieux, allié aux puissants et aux riches, machine géante de gouvernement, dressée pour la conquête des peuples. Les papes s'étaient réveillés Césars. (emphasis mine)

[129] Zola reminded his readers of this in 1901 when introducing 'M. Scheurer-Kestner' in *La Vérité en Marche*, giving a brief explanation of why he had only involved himself in late 1897.

The two uses of 'vérité' in this scene illustrate, through their internal opposition, why it has become and will continue to be so important to Zola in his later years. Pierre, his surrogate, has a secular, historical revelation in the massive cathedral, a resurrection of the *Rougon-Macquart* concern for environment: the Catholic Church's power-hungry ways are explained as stemming from the soil of Rome, its imperial past still nourishing modern attitudes. In contrast, the allegorical figure of Vérité on Alexander VII's tomb, crafted by Bernini and his workshop, rings hollow: the intransigence of Alexander's most recent successors has, for Pierre and Zola, created a chasm between the Church and the Truth.[130]

Pierre's visit to the cathedral draws on Zola's own, in November 1894. He spent several weeks in Italy, primarily the capital, with his wife Alexandrine, researching the future novel and trying (unsuccessfully) to obtain an audience with the Pope. He visited the papal tombs, just as Pierre does, and wrote in his travel diary that the cathedral was « un musée froid et grandiose »; the tombs were a sign of « cet orgueil souverain dans la mort. »[131]

Zola's stay in Rome, and the disabused reflections on science and faith into which it played, seem to have been the starting-point for an expansion of the role of 'vérité' in his novels. Yet the travel diary, eventually edited and published along with its predecessor describing Lourdes by René Ternois in the 1950s, makes no mention of the specifics of funeral statuary, even though it does reveal a Zola, in Mitterand's words, « comme obsédé par Saint-Pierre. »[132] Alexander VII's allegorical coterie, along with others in its vicinity, are absent by name from the

[130] It should also be noted that, whether Zola knew it or not, Alexander VII was a particularly apt pope through whom to make this point. He was responsible for placing all works concerning heliocentrism on the Index, setting up a conflict between science and religion that continued in the 1890s.
[131] Emile Zola, *Oeuvres Complètes* vol. VII (Paris: Cercle du Livre Précieux, 1966), pp. 1021, 1067.
[132] *Zola* vol. III, p. 114.

journal. They were filled back in and described in detail during the composition of the novel many months later.

In other words, Pierre Froment's divination under the dome did not have a clear antecedent in Zola's own visit. Rather, the increased statures of 'vérité' and 'justice' were crafted at his writing-desk, on a conceptual rather than experiential basis. It was Zola's good fortune that he was writing about a city that could provide allegorical figures, in the tombs, to support his ideological choices.

Those choices were, instead, born of the struggle taking place back home between secularists and scientists, on one side, and the advocates of faith on the other. Zola was not a prime mover in the controversy, but his sympathies were clear and publicly declared; he spoke at a banquet in honour of Berthelot when the latter became embroiled with Brunetière over the issue. He stepped into that maelstrom almost as soon as he returned to Paris, with Brunetière's article 'Après le Procès' appearing in January 1895, as previously noted.

The personal combined with the political for Zola: by chance, Brunetière's Roman holiday had taken place at exactly the same time as Zola's own. Both men had been in Rome in November 1894, both had sought an audience with the pope, but only Brunetière had succeeded.[133] Much more was at stake than sour grapes; but Zola's intellectual concern with defending positivism can only have been strengthened by individual run-ins with both his critical nemesis and the Catholic hierarchy.

Along with 'vérité', 'banqueroute' also proliferated under Zola's pen from *Rome* on. We have seen that Zola used 'banqueroute de la science' in his second 'Lettre à la Jeunesse' to strike

[133] Harry Paul, 'The Debate over the Bankruptcy of Science in 1895' (*French Historical Studies* 5:3 [Spring 1968]), p. 303, for Brunetière; for Zola's failure, Mitterand, *Zola* vol. III, pp. 104-5.

covertly at Brunetière during the Dreyfus Affair. The impact of the 1895 controversy, despite Zola's somewhat fringe participation, is strongly felt in his novels. The 20 *Rougon-Macquart* novels feature 'banqueroute' a mere 10 times in total (even *L'Argent*, a novel which portrays plenty of them, only does so twice), and it does not appear in *Lourdes*. Suddenly, *Rome* alone contains 10 mentions of the noun, only to be outdone by the 12 of *Paris*. The effect is less lasting than for 'vérité', as *Fécondité* contains 6 mentions, *Travail* one and *Vérité* lacks it entirely. It seems, then, that the Dreyfus Affair finally supersedes the bankruptcy of science controversy in Zola's mind, but, as 'Lettre à la Jeunesse' illustrates, not without a final paroxysm. Truth and bankruptcy, in their different ways, owe their rise in Zola's novels to his visit to Rome. Without Alexander VII's funeral statuary and, more importantly, Leo XIII's audience with Brunetière, neither would have come to symbolize the themes with which the author was most concerned in his final period.

Across a range of terms, then, the marks left by contemporary polemics on Zola's writing can be traced quantitatively and qualitatively. We will see, in the next chapter, that Brunetière similarly connected his Dreyfus-era writing to preceding stances on literature and society. There it will be a case foremost of continuity; but in Zola, change predominates. The one constant, in his polemical writing whatever the period, is 'vérité'. Between the period of high naturalism and that of the Dreyfus Affair, however, he attenuates the presence of 'science' and replaces it with 'justice'. This attenuation also makes itself felt in the novels posterior to the Affair, in which science is often an underlying theme but quite rarely invoked by name. The long-term evolution of Zola's fictional appeals to 'vérité' demonstrates the increasing porosity of those novels to political discourse.

Justice Mirrors Truth

The kinship between 'justice' and 'vérité' is fully revealed by Table IV (p.281). Just like its cousin, 'justice' is almost non-existent in the conceptual sense in the *Rougon-Macquart*, with only very sparse references. It is present in *Lourdes*, but uses of the term increase dramatically from *Rome* on, with the same heavy but temporary decrease for *Fécondité* (in this case, over 88%). The rise of justice in the final two *Villes* novels confirms that its pairing with truth was a pre-existing concept in Zola's rhetorical landscape *before* the Dreyfus Affair; he did not invent the phrase 'vérité et justice' to champion the Dreyfusard cause. That such large parts of that landscape were blocked out by exile in England provides a piquant example of life imitating art. Zola, whose characters were so often in thrall to their environments, was himself dramatically affected by crossing the Channel and produced a text different from what came before or after in these key features.

Can the same origin be ascribed to justice as to truth? Returning to the scene of Pierre Froment in the popes' mausoleum, it can be observed that Justice is also an allegorical companion of Alexander VII: « Alexandre VII, assisté de la Prudence et de la Justice, a devant lui la Charité et la Vérité et un squelette se lève, montrant le sablier vide... » Two futher passages, one from the conclusion of *Rome* and the other from its followup, *Paris*, complete the picture. As Pierre Froment is getting ready to leave Rome, he turns his thoughts to Paris and has a further epiphany, this time concerning justice and charity:

> Non, non! cela n'était plus possible, la misère noire aboutissant au suicide, au milieu de ce grand Paris regorgeant de richesses, ivre de jouissances, jetant pour le plaisir les millions à la rue! L'édifice social était pourri à la base, tout croulait dans la boue et dans

> le sang. Jamais il n'avait senti à ce point l'inutilité dérisoire de la **charité**. Et, tout d' un coup, il eut conscience que le mot attendu, le mot qui jaillissait enfin du grand muet séculaire, du peuple écrasé et bâillonné, était le mot de **justice**. Ah! oui, **justice**, et non plus **charité**! La **charité** n'avait fait qu' éterniser la misère, la **justice** la guérirait peut-être. C'était de justice que les misérables avaient faim, un acte de justice pouvait seul balayer l'ancien monde, pour reconstruire le nouveau...Demain allait-il donc être enfin ce jour de justice et de vérité?[134] (emphasis mine)

The chiasmatic use of 'justice' and 'charité' late in the paragraph[135] embodies textually the ideological shift Pierre is undergoing, turning away from Catholic ideas of charity as a social good and replacing it with justice which, the Roman stay has taught him, is only an effective concept in secular hands. Truth and justice are Pierre and Zola's wishes for all of French society as of 1895. Sculpture as a material manifestation of these ideas is absent here, but will return with renewed urgency in *Paris*. Pierre (who serves as protagonist for all three *Villes*) visits the sculptor Jahan, who muses on his projects:

> C'était une figure de femme, nue, debout et haute, d'une majesté si auguste, dans la simplicité des lignes, qu'elle semblait géante. Sa chevelure éparse et féconde était comme les rayons de sa face, dont la souveraine beauté resplendissait, pareille au soleil...
>
> Jahan se remit à parler lentement, dans son rêve.
>
> « Vous vous souvenez, je voulais donner un pendant à la Fécondité que vous avez vue, les flancs solides, capables de porter un monde. Et j'avais une Charité dont je laissais

[134] Zola, *Oeuvres Complètes* vol.VII, pp. 1015-6.
[135] These are, in fact, two overlapping chiasms: CJJCCJ, which can broken down as CJJC mixed with JCCJ. The revelation begins with charity and, by its end, supersedes it with justice.

> sécher la terre, tellement je la sentais peu, banale, poncive... Alors, j'ai eu l'idée d'une Justice. *Mais le glaive, les balances, ah! non! Ce n'était pas cette Justice-là, vêtue de la robe, coiffée de la toque, qui m'enflammait.* J'étais hanté passionnément par l'autre, celle que les petits, que les souffrants attendent, celle qui seule peut mettre enfin un peu d'ordre et de bonheur parmi nous... Et je l'ai vue ainsi, toute nue, toute simple, toute grande. Elle est le soleil, un soleil de beauté, d'harmonie et de force, parce que le soleil est l'unique justice, brûlant au ciel pour tout le monde... »
>
> Pierre était très ému de retrouver, dans cette imagination d'artiste, la pensée qu'il roulait depuis si longtemps, l'ère prochaine de la Justice, sur les ruines de ce monde, que la Charité, après des siècles d'expérience, n'avait pu sauver de l'écroulement final.[136] (emphasis mine)

Jahan's aesthetic reasoning recapitulates the political philosophy at which Pierre had arrived by the end of his time in Rome. But it goes further in rejecting the conventional allegorical trappings of Justice, her glaive, scales, and clothing. Note that the sculptor's Justice stands erect and has simple lines, which contrasts with the indolently reclining, opulently dressed Justice of Alexander VII's tomb: Bernini's Justice[137] also wears a military helmet that recalls the elements Jahan decries. This scene thus condenses the two from *Rome* that have been discussed above, enacting a combined dismissal of aesthetic tradition and the ideology that it served.[138] As in *L'Oeuvre*, where the novelist Sandoz served as his thinly-veiled surrogate, Zola uses an artistic character to crystallize the ideas behind the text, and the network of references that overlays *Rome* and *Paris* explains the significance of truth and justice in those novels, the ones that would

[136] Zola, *Paris*, pp. 716-7.
[137] Bernini and his workshop were responsible for the design and execution of Alexander VII's tomb.

follow, and in the Dreyfus Affair. Pierre and Jahan's conversation also underlines that the meeting of aesthetics and politics has moved *inside* his fiction; they each represent one half of the equation and their discourses complement and reinforce each other.

The Affair was thus part of a larger struggle for Zola. Even though he began by asserting that he was drawn to it first and foremost as an author, in truth such a label no longer held the same significance by that point in his career. An analysis of his conceptual evolution over the *Villes* demonstrates that the idealistic political philosophy for which they were a vehicle was readily transferrable to commentary on the Dreyfus Affair. Zola had the weapons already to hand when he chose to fight for Dreyfus.

Shades of the Apocalypse

One episode from that fight further underlines the reverberations of the bankruptcy of science feud during the Affair. The solitary direct appeal to scientific method in *La Vérité en Marche* occurs in 'Lettre à M. Brisson', published on the 16th of July 1898, on the eve of Zola's retrial at Versailles, from which he would flee to England after the first day's session. Brisson was then President of the Council (prime minister), and had replaced Jules Méline in that role less than 3 weeks earlier. This was Zola's first published word on the Affair since he had been arraigned for libel in January, immediately following 'J'Accuse…!'. The circumstances place added significance on the author's words, not only because of the extended silence that has preceded them but also because he is writing for the first time as an accused man, and in the immediate runup to his second court appearance.

He stresses the publication gap from the outset, claiming that only the pain of recent developments has drawn him to break the law of silence ("depuis que j'appartiens à la loi de mon

pays, je me suis fait une loi de me tenir à l'écart de toute polémique") he had previously been observing. However, it does not take him long to resume the tone with which 'J'Accuse…!' had concluded, accusing Brisson of having doomed his ministry as soon as he had taken office and ending the article's preamble with the dark charge "vous venez de tuer l'idéal. C'est un crime. Et tout se paye, vous serez puni."[139]

Although Zola does not spell out textually what the idealicide consists in, it can quickly be reconstructed; three days before the publication of the article, Picquart, the colonel who had uncovered the falseness of the accusations against Dreyfus and the possibility of Esterhazy's involvement, had been arrested on charges of passing military information to his civilian lawyer, Leblois. This followed closely on the heels of the new war minister, Cavaignac's, ultimately disastrous initiatives definitively to put the case to rest by producing the 'proofs' of Dreyfus' guilt. The crucial piece was, unbeknown to him, the document which would come to be known as the 'faux Henry', forged by Henry in order retrospectively to shore up the dossier against Dreyfus.[140] By attempting to prove the truth of Dreyfus' guilt beyond further doubt, Cavaignac achieved precisely the opposite.

While Zola could not yet foresee the dramatic revelation of this, and Henry's consequent suicide, that would ensue once he had himself fled to London, his conviction in Picquart's probity, and the tenuousness of the charges on which the officer had been imprisoned, underlay Zola's tone in the 'Lettre à M. Brisson'. The author's disappointment would also have been increased by the fact that this was the first change in the cabinet since Zola had involved himself

[139] *La Vérité en Marche*, p. 115.

[140] This was the letter purporting to be from Panizzardi, the Italian military attaché and spymaster in Paris, to his German counterpart von Schwarzkoppen (the recipient of the *bordereau* at the root of the whole Dreyfus case). In it, Henry has 'Panizzardi' name Dreyfus and includes the sentence 'je dirai que jamais j'avais des relations avec ce Juif.' When, a few weeks following Cavaignac's producing it in the Chamber, the army investigated the piece further, a Captain Cuignet realized its forged origin and Henry was detained, confessing and then cutting his throat with a razor soon afterwards in the Mont-Valérien prison.

in the Affair, late the previous year. He could have expected that with Méline, he of the declaration 'il n'y a pas d'Affaire Dreyfus' a few months earlier, no longer head of the government, a transformation in policy towards the case would follow, but Brisson quickly proved his reluctance to change course. It would only be once the extent of Henry's duplicity transpired that official actions would start to move away from judicial measures taken against the leading Dreyfusards, and towards a revision of Dreyfus' case.

Zola's disappointment and outrage drive him to use quasi-religious, prophetic vocabulary, speaking of the murder of ideals and forecasting a punishment perhaps more cosmic than political. In a recent work, Gisèle Sapiro has spoken of Zola's Dreyfus Affair engagement in terms inspired by Max Weber: "c'est la conscience morale de sa reponsabilité d'auteur qui conduit Zola à prendre la parole publiquement : écrire engage, cela implique une éthique de la vérité, de la liberté et de la justice. Il invente ainsi la figure de l'intellectuel moderne, qui possède nombre de traits idéaltypiques du prophète tel que l'a défini Max Weber."[141] Noting the increasingly supernatural tone of *La Vérité en Marche* allows us to conceive Zola's prophetic status in more rhetorical terms; he not only expresses an independent, extra-institutional conscience ("tel le prophète, il agit de manière désintéressée"), but also reactivates ancient topoi of punishment and natural disaster.

When Dreyfus' second panel of military judges delivered a guilty verdict to match the first, at Rennes in early September 1899, Zola's response, 'Le Cinquième Acte', began as follows: "Je suis dans l'épouvante. Et ce n'est plus la colère, l'indignation vengeresse, le besoin de crier le crime, d'en demander le châtiment, au nom de la vérité et de la justice ; c'est l'épouvante, la terreur sacrée de l'homme qui voit l'impossible se réaliser, les fleuves remonter vers leurs

[141] Gisèle Sapiro, *La Responsabilité de l'Ecrivain* (Paris: Seuil, 2011), p. 511.

sources, la terre culbuter sous le soleil."[142] "Indignation vengeresse" harks back to 'Lettre à M. Brisson', and Zola makes clear that the frame of reference needed to express the emotions stirred in him by the Affair has moved further towards myth. Greek tales, or the Old Testament's suspensions of the natural order, are called to mind by the mention of the quaking earth and fleeing rivers.

Zola, then, is not just adopting the sociological perspective of the Weberian prophet, he is evoking the voice in the wilderness with which Biblical prophets spoke of troubles present and future. Even as the Dreyfus Affair shed its mystique to become a succession of political deals,[143] Zola opposed that development with a primal appeal to elemental forces. Here, aesthetics become sundered from politics; the author's loss of faith in the political order is complete, and provokes a flight into the ideal. When the reality could no longer fit the matrix that Zola had constructed from his novels to interpret the Affair, he turned to this new mode of discourse.

This mode can be analyzed using Marc Angenot's theoretical work on the pamphlet genre. Angenot's study is a detailed axiology of structuralist inspiration that cannot adequately be described here, but a crucial element that is of relevance to Zola's later writings about the Affair is the following. On Angenot's analysis, the pamphleteer writes because truth has been assailed and he (nearly all his examples, over a 100-year period from 1868 to 1968, are men) is denouncing that assault. Crucially, however, this denunciation comes *too late*, and Angenot ventriloquizes the archetypal pamphleteer thus:

> Il y a scandale (erreur triomphante appuyée sur les Pouvoirs et travestie en vérité). Il faut que je le dénonce, sans avoir d'autre mandat pour ce faire que la vérité bafouée. Enfin, ce

[142] *La Vérité en Marche*, p. 147.
[143] Such was Charles Péguy's famous and bitter judgement of the Affair in his memoir *Notre Jeunesse*: « tout commence en mystique et tout finit en politique. » (Paris: Gallimard [1933], p. 27.)

mandat que je me donne est à la fois urgent et *vain* - il est déjà trop tard renverser le cours de la dégradation des valeurs.[144]

Angenot will summarize this too-lateness in the term 'vision crépusculaire du monde'. "Le pamphlet est une voix d'après-le déluge: s'il lance un appel ultime, il sait qu'il prophétise la fin".[145] The tone and tropes of 'Le Cinquième Acte' are clearly redolent of the crepuscular vision outlined by Angenot. The flood that swept away truth at Rennes may have been described by Zola in terms of rivers flowing upstream rather than bursting their banks, but the structure - down to the 'appel ultime' inherent in the article's very title - is analogous.

It is apparent that such was not Zola's polemical persona earlier in the Affair. The deliberate provocations of 'J'Accuse...!' were performed with the goal of curing France; in other words, it was not too late, and Zola was speaking in terms of 'salissure' rather than something irremediably awry. What fell in between - his own conviction, the flight to England, the nationalist counterattack following Henry's suicide, Labori's shooting and Dreyfus' second conviction - moved Zola into the pamphleteer's position of enunciation. Noting this allows us to highlight the dynamic aspects of the Affair, the ways in which its rhetorical landscape changed over time, and to track the 'hardening' of viewpoints that will also be apparent in Brunetière, Céard and de Bouhélier.

Zola also makes more pragmatic points in ‘Le Cinquième Acte’. He re-emphasizes that France, by not clearing up the farrago of the Affair herself, is leaving the door open for Germany to reignite it at will by leaking the crucial documents, with potentially ruinous consequences for Zola and his compatriots. Yet to do so, he again couches the argument in mythic language,

[144] Marc Angenot, *La Parole Pamphlétaire. Contribution à la Typologie des Discours Modernes* (Paris: Payot, 1982), p. 338.
[145] ibid., p. 99.

draped around a core of dread: "Je n'ai plus que l'épouvante de la voir [*la vérité*] arriver, dans un coup de foudre de la Némésis vengeresse, saccageant la patrie, si nous ne nous hâtons pas de la faire resplendir nous-mêmes, sous notre clair soleil de France."[146] A possible textual German blow against French morale is rewritten and personified, with a figure from legend laying waste to the land.[147] Henry Céard, as will be discussed in a later chapter, responded dismissively to these claims, writing a piece called 'Némésis' in which he retorted "Némésis? Connais pas." The bluntness of this statement, particularly when set alongside the rest of Céard's more detailed and crafted writing, betrays its author's unwillingness to address Zola's concerns, or to acknowledge that patriotic ideas could also motivate the Dreyfusards.

Past studies have underplayed the supernatural dimensions of *La Vérité en Marche*. Scholars such as Pagès have, rightly, stressed the forensic nature of 'J'Accuse…!', and the manner in which Zola sets out to expose the mechanism of events in the Affair, allowing a confused French public to consider the reasons for a cover-up.[148] But the totality of the articles, as evidenced above, contains other rhetorical dimensions, of which the mythological becomes increasingly prevalent as the Affair progresses. In a sense, the polemical volume thus mirrors the evolution witnessed in its author's novels; from a concern with technique and realism towards the use of more primal, symbolic foundations for his writing. Zola's warnings of Nemesis devastating France appear to be a negative image of the one on which he chose to end the *Rougon-Macquart*, that of Pascal and Clotilde Rougon's infant child holding its arm raised as a banner, woven around with narratorial speculation on its possible future role as regenerator and

---

[146] *La Vérité en Marche*, p.160.
[147] Zola was not alone on the Dreyfusard side in appealing to Greek models of divine punishment. Ruth Harris has pointed out that Salomon Reinach, brother of Jacques, published an 1898 pamphlet denouncing the anti-Dreyfusards and epigrammed with a citation from Aeschylus' *Eumenides* (Harris, *Dreyfus*, p. 162).
[148] Alain Pagès, 'La Rhétorique de *J'Accuse*', [Web], uploaded: Nov. 15, 2007.
URL: http://www.item.ens.fr/index.php?id=187352. Retrieved 09/16/2012.

saviour of France: « Puisque la nation était à refaire, celui-ci ne venait-il pas pour cette besogne? Il reprendrait l'expérience, relèverait les murs, rendrait une certitude aux hommes tâtonnants, bâtirait la cité de justice, où l'unique loi du travail assurerait le bonheur. »[149]

Why this microcosmic evolution in tone within *La Vérité en Marche*, at a time when Zola's novels had, it is generally acknowledged, already made the move from realism to utopianism?[150] The answer lies, I believe, in the direction taken by events during the three years in which Zola was commenting on them. The shock which resonates from his words in the 'Lettre à M. Brisson' and, more keenly, 'Le Cinquième Acte' is intimately bound up with the move from essentially forensic rhetoric to an epideictic form, one of praise and blame, that favours cosmic tropes in its characterization of responsibility and blame. As implied above, the preamble to the Brisson letter contains two primary ideas; the first, dismay and consternation at the new cabinet's prosecution of a policy towards the Affair worse still than its predecessor's, the second, promises of punishment for that policy.

This explains the author's bitter claim that 'vous [Brisson] venez de tuer l'idéal'; the realization that, much like in the Vietnam war, a change in government personnel would have no relaxing effect on policy, deprives Zola of the previously-held belief that only certain vested interests were involved in the suppression of the truth. Brisson's initial moves as premier forced Zola to concede that any idealism regarding the political class was untenable. This pushes him, in the very next sentence, to take refuge in the ideal of supernatural retribution in the absence of the rule of law.

---

[149] Emile Zola, *Le Docteur Pascal* in *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. Maurice le Blond, vol.22 (Paris: Bernouard, 1928), p. 343.

[150] Sylvie Thorel-Cailleteau, for instance, devotes much of her *La Pertinence Réaliste: Zola* (Paris: Champion, 2001) to distinguishing between 'le naturalisme du désastre', which she associates primarily with the *Rougon-Macquart*, and 'le naturalisme utopique', which is the province of the *Villes* and *Evangiles*.

Brisson disappointed Zola so not simply because he was a new man at the head of the government. The Berthelot banquet of three years earlier was partly a show of Republican ideological force against the attacks that had been inspired by 'Après une Visite au Vatican' and furthered by numerous Catholic theologians and philosophers.[151] Zola, as already noted, spoke in praise of the chemist and statesman - and so did Brisson, then president of the Chamber of Deputies. Brisson, described by one scholar as an 'anticlerical firebrand',[152] asserted that the attacks on science and on Berthelot (the two were not, at the time, easily distinguishable in France) were of a purely political motivation, a spur to reactionary thought.

Until June and July 1898, Zola must have considered Brisson an ally, someone who shared many of his concerns and goals. His wrathful promises of vengeance in the 'Lettre à M. Brisson' are silent on their past association, but the feeling of betrayal is palpable and supported by the historical record. As with the rise of truth and justice in Zola's rhetoric, this article underlines the importance of the bankruptcy of science controversy to his take on the Affair. It set up the opposing camps, with Zola and Brunetière on opposite sides and men like Charles Richet, future Nobel laureate, quick to assail Brunetière on both subjects. But, more than that, both debates were ultimately concerned with what kind of country France should be, how its children should be raised, where its public morality should come from and how its citizens should participate in its affairs. Because Zola's naturalist aesthetics had, for decades, already concerned themselves with these extra-literary questions, he was able to transition from one to the other with relative ease.

[151] Jacqueline Lalouette, 'La querelle de la foi et de la science et le banquet Berthelot', *Revue Historique*, 300/4, 608 (1998), pp. 825-43.
[152] Harry Paul, 'The Debate over the Bankruptcy of Science in 1895', p. 320.

A Passionate Affair

Science may eclipse itself in Zola's discourse on the Affair, but a term that returns again and again in his writing and that of other authors is 'passion'. It appears to be used almost equally to praise or to blame, again underlining the strong epideictic element in the rhetoric used to discuss the Dreyfus case and its implications. A review of the general theory of rhetoric will be of use here, not least because the authors with whom we are dealing had received an education in which the classical tradition was far more prominent than it is today, and Aristotelian and Ciceronian ideas of rhetoric were still significant in their contribution to the ways men like Zola and Brunetière constructed their arguments and addressed their audiences.

In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, the most important text dealing with persuasion in the Western tradition, he identifies three principal forms rhetoric can take: deliberative, forensic and epideictic. Deliberative rhetoric is characterized as a primarily political form of discourse, used to answer such questions as 'Should war be declared?' As such, it projects towards the future. Forensic rhetoric's function is to establish guilt or innocence; the term derives from the courts, and thus it treats past events. Finally, epideictic rhetoric is rhetoric of praise and blame, used for official functions such as (both in Antiquity and in the present) the Olympic Games, or state funerals and festivals. Temporally, Aristotle describes it as present-centred. The three forms are thus, on his account, separated not only by their functions but also by their 'tense'.[153]

Using these ancient categories to examine Zola and his contemporaries' opinions on the Affair is revealing in that what started as a legal controversy nevertheless generates less forensic rhetoric than it does speech in the other two categories. The figures of the men involved attract much of the praise and blame, but reading for 'passion' in *La Vérité en Marche* illustrates that

[153] Book I, Chapter 3 introduces the three forms. Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*. ed. George Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991), pp. 47-50.

these categories are also applied more broadly, to the public at large. The first two appearances of 'passion' in the text give a taste of this: firstly, in the preface, Zola (writing in early 1901) refers to 'les passions actuelles'[154] as ensuring the impossibility of writing the history of the Affair until what were then unavailable documents came to light to cut through the emotion. "Il y faudra du recul, il y faudra surtout l'étude désintéressée des pièces dont l'immense dossier se prépare."

In contrast, Zola, in the brief foreword (also from 1901) to his 'M. Scheurer-Kestner' of 1897, is happy to exalt his own passion, because he conjoins it with the two dominant terms of *La Vérité en Marche*: 'vérité' and 'justice'. He explains that his initial interest in the Affair was principally professional, that the human drama of the unfolding events drew him in: "la pitié, la foi, la passion de la vérité et de la justice, sont venues ensuite."[155] It is no surprise to see truth and justice underpinned by passion; Zola's mushrooming use of them is all the more plausible when underpinned by intense emotion. Yet 'foi' seems an odd choice of term, particularly from a vantage point of more than three years later. But when one considers just how much work truth and justice do in these articles, and how often they function autonomously of forensic rhetoric, faith gains weight as a concept that can explain their role. It also accords with the evolution illustrated above between the *Villes* and *Evangiles*: increasing uses of truth and justice, along with a diminishing role for science, amount to an expansion of a particular kind of faith at the heart of Zola's ideology.

'Passion', meanwhile, stands out as an intrinsically neutral term in his writing, gaining its polarity principally from the immediate context in which it appears. For instance, he explains the forced withdrawal of *Le Figaro*'s support for Zola's articles by 'les habitudes et les passions de

[154] *La Vérité en Marche*, p. iii.
[155] ibid., p. 2.

sa clientèle'[156], but goes on to speak of his own 'passion de tolerance et d'émancipation humaine'.[157] This is not an ad hoc manoeuvre confined to his Dreyfusard writings; right from the preface of the first *Rougon-Macquart* novel, *La Fortune des Rougon*, the same term appears to describe the titular family. «Physiologiquement, ils sont la lente succession des accidents nerveux et sanguins qui se déclarent dans une race, à la suite d'une première lésion organique, et qui déterminent, selon les milieux, chez chacun des individus de cette race, les sentiments, les désirs, **les passions**, toutes les manifestations humaines, naturelles et instinctives, dont les produits prennent les noms convenus de vertus et de vices. »[158] (emphasis mine)

Here already, passion is presented as fundamentally unaligned with ethics. The monism Zola uses to describe vice and virtue in the same frame implies that a passion will be good or ill by virtue of its objects, not its nature. The *Rougon-Macquart* would go on to feature innumerable examples of both the 'virtuous' and 'vicious' varieties. That final formulation is the clearest sign of Zola's unabashed allegiance to Taine's thought, at the time (1871) that the preface was written. It is a direct allusion to what, for some, is the sole legacy of Taine's enormous body of work: « le vice et la vertu sont des produits comme le vitriol et le sucre. » Taine inserted that maxim into a preface of his own, to his *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise*, in 1863. Although, in the wider context of his work, the older man retained a belief in free will,[159] what most impressed the younger Zola was the thoroughgoing determinism inherent in the phrase he chose to reference.

---

[156] ibid., p.26.
[157] ibid., p.31.
[158] Emile Zola, *Les Rougon-Macquart* vol.I, eds. Armand Lanoux and Henri Mitterand (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléïade, 1967), p. 3.
[159] D.G. Charlton, *France: A Companion to French Studies* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1972), pp. 253-4.

In the light of the broad spectrum of fortunes and temperaments to which that passion leads in the novels themselves, it is fair to conclude that, already in 1871, the term denotes a blend of emotion and action that is capable of leading to any result, good or bad. In the Dreyfus-era 'Lettre à la Jeunesse', we thus see « passions nobles, qui ont soulevé la jeunesse des Ecoles » put side-by-side with (or at least two pages before) « abominables passions politiques et religieuses. »[160] The vision of society that Zola had laid out through characters such as Aristide Saccard and Jean Macquart was still active in his portraits of the French as they reacted to the Dreyfus Affair. Ursula Bähler has examined the links between the *Rougon-Macquart* and *La Vérité en Marche* from the perspective of shared rhetorical figures and topoi, such as the image of truth being buried underground until it explodes out.[161] To this analysis we can add that the role of passion continues to be the same in the latter work; a force whose outcomes depend on the individual and their beliefs, and which can apply to everyone regardless of their condition. This may further explain the appeal to faith in *La Vérité en Marche*. Since vice and virtue could not be adequately distinguished within humanity due to their common origin and conventional distinction ('les noms convenus'), an appeal to the transcendental instead became necessary for Zola to continue making sense of the crisis.

The rhetorical common ground between Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards has increasingly been acknowledged, for instance regarding notions of masculinity as they were put into question by the Affair.[162] Reading for 'passion' in *La Vérité en Marche*, in contrast, shows that the *same* word can be applied by the same author to the two sides with opposed meanings. What Zola himself somewhat apologetically describes as the 'répétitions' of his series of articles

[160] *La Vérité en Marche*, p.41, 43.
[161] Ursula Bähler, 'Sur les traces naturalistes de *La Vérité en marche*', *Cahiers naturalistes* 82 (2008), pp. 83-108.
[162] See Christopher Forth's *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood* for detailed discussion of this point. Forth illustrates that Zola himself was a focus for discourse on manhood in the Affair, with his weight loss since the 1880s often praised by sympathizers.

is thus, in this case, the very opposite: one use of 'passion' may have essentially the antonymous meaning to the previous instance. Emotion or ardour alone are not presented as leaning towards either end of the ethical spectrum, but as soon as ideology enters the text, the ‘passion’ veers to one of two extremes; scurrilous for the popular press and the Catholics, noble for sympathetic students and those campaigning for revision.

The purpose of this analysis is not to paint Zola’s late polemical writing as irrational or uncharitable. However, it does serve to illustrate that *La Vérité en Marche* is not a rationalist work, and that Zola uses a variety of tools in order to achieve his goals. Indeed ‘passion’ appears to act almost as a floating signifier for him, with its true meaning existing independently of any direct reference inherent in the term.

Conclusion

Zola's intervention in the Dreyfus Affair was marked by a persistent tension between continuity with, and difference from, his earlier literary campaigns. He found many different models for the rhetoric of 'J'Accuse!...' and its brethren in his former efforts to defend naturalism against its many opponents. In particular, the Affair was the apotheosis of a lifelong commitment to truth in both the political and aesthetic realms. Yet when that truth was thwarted by the anti-Dreyfusards, Zola turned to new modes of speech, adopting the mantle of a prophet and asserting a faith in truth and justice increasingly unconnected to the reality of the crisis.

Perhaps most significantly, the seemingly intuitive use of truth and justice as rallying cries for the Dreyfusard cause - after all, they were defending a man who had been wrongly convicted based on falsified evidence - can be seen to have a fictional origin. This has not been acknowledged to date; even revisionist histories of the Affair such as that of Ruth Harris accept

Truth and Justice as self-evident ideals for Zola and his allies.[163] I have argued that these terms were not a bespoke response to the circumstances of the Dreyfus case: Zola had, it so happened, begun promoting them in his previous two novels as part of the idealistic vision of France that his later fiction promoted. Aesthetics and politics could be combined in *La Vérité en Marche* because they were already commingled in the second and third *Villes*.

Such findings underscore that literature was always political in Zola's career, no matter how often he had denounced the pettiness of 'la cuisine politique'.[164] The first *Rougon-Macquart* novel, *La Fortune des Rougon*, had been a scathing local account of Napoleon III's rise to power from the perspective of Plassans, Zola's fictional southern French town modelled on his native Aix-en-Provence. And it was written while the emperor was still in power; if the Franco-Prussian War had not brought the regime crashing down before *La Fortune des Rougon* could appear in volume form, Zola would most likely have faced censure from the authorities. Under the Third Republic, through the furores over, most saliently, *L'Assommoir*, *Germinal* and *La Débâcle*, the cycle continued to generate political as well as aesthetic condemnation, to its author's general delight. His daily dose of 'crapauds' had to be guaranteed, and we have seen the effects of their absence on *Fécondité*.

Zola's seven articles on the Dreyfus Affair post-'J'Accuse...!' have received little attention. On the macro-historical scale this may be justified: the author's legal travails and his flight to England effectively ended his role as an actor who possessed the power to inflect the crisis. Yet the fulminating charges that litter those later pieces, which occupy a period of over

[163] In Harris' preface, for instance, she speaks of "a legacy of intolerance that was too often concealed beneath Dreyfusard slogans of Truth and Justice." (*Dreyfus,* p. xvii) - a revision of the slogan's aftereffects but not of its origin.

[164] See Jean-Philippe Mathy, *Melancholy Politics* (University Park: Penn State Press, 2011), pp. 110-11 for an example of this. Mathy also notes the apocalyptic slant to Zola's Dreyfus-era writing, linking it to Pierre Bourdieu's rhetoric in his own stances as a public intellectual.

two years, testify to just the level of powerlessness that many Dreyfusards continued to experience, often to their surprise. Every turn for the better in the case was swiftly mitigated by bad news; Henry's damning suicide was followed by an astonishing anti-Dreyfusard counterattack led by Charles Maurras, who declared the scheming officer's blood to be sacred and asserted that his forgeries served a higher truth.[165] The final straw, for Zola and many others, was the amnesty law of 1900, which brought the curtain down on the many legal skirmishes still swirling around the Affair and overwhelmingly benefitted the anti-Dreyfusards. And in, bitterly and emptily, reprising the format of 'J'Accuse...!' to protest the law to the new president, Emile Loubet, Zola testified, years before Péguy, to the hollowness felt by many who had fought for the truth and justice Zola espoused.

[165] In *La Gazette de France*, 6-7 Sep., 1898. See Michael Burns, *The Dreyfus Affair: A Documentary History* (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), pp. 121-3.

Ferdinand Brunetière: anti-Naturalist to anti-Dreyfusard

Ferdinand's Brunetière's long critical career, the highlight of which was his election to the Académie Francaise and which was ended by his death at 57 in 1906, offers an idiosyncratic mix of moralism and aestheticism. Much-diminished in the historical record compared to his pre-eminence in the 1880s and 1890s, Brunetière nevertheless continues to interest scholars on a periodic basis.[166] He is remembered now largely for two things; his constant and scathing opposition to Zola's naturalist school (making him a favoured source of citations on the subject), and his moderate anti-Dreyfusism, exemplified by perhaps the most-cited anti-Dreyfusard text of all, 'Après le Procès', an article produced in the wake of Zola's conviction for libel in early 1898. The barbed epithet bestowed on him by Jules Renard, "le préfet de police de la literature",[167] appears apt when applied to either Brunetière's anti-naturalist criticism or to his anti-Dreyfusism; the sententious, relentless drive of his critiques seems reflective of a man who always placed logos ahead of pathos.

Despite the fact that opposition to Zola was the seed of Brunetière's best-known writings (both aesthetic and political), little to no scholarship has addressed the possible links between these two intellectual commitments, with Brunetière's ideas on the army or racism interesting historians more than possible continuities with his aesthetics. Ruth Harris' recent book on the Affair typifies this by commenting in a footnote that "Brunetière went on endlessly about Zola's literary brutalism".[168] I have no wish to disagree with this assessment – and anyone who has made themselves read Brunetière's prose at length will be sympathetic to her choice of verb

[166] In recent years the most significant revisiting of his legacy has been Antoine Compagnon's *Connaissez-Vous Brunetière?* (Paris: Seuil, 1997), which explores the friendship between Brunetière and Flore Singer, a crucial figure in the contemporary Jewish community.
[167] Cited in C. Charle, *La Naissance des Intellectuels*, p.218.
[168] Ruth Harris, *Dreyfus*, p.416 (note 69).

phrase – yet stopping there does our understanding of Brunetière's engagement in the Dreyfus Affair a disservice. Christophe Charle, author of the landmark Bourdieusian study of the Affair and its antecedents, *La Naissance des Intellectuels*, gives the relationship between the two spheres more consideration, but his methodology is one of field analysis, mapping the links between social positioning and choice of side for or against Dreyfus. As such, the relationship between functions and anti-Dreyfusism trumps an examination of Brunetière's (or anyone else's) aesthetic texts in Charle's study.[169]

Brunetière did indeed go on endlessly, but his often-cited, seldom-studied collection of essays *Le Roman Naturaliste* displays a surprising effort to shift the meaning of "naturalisme" *away* from Zola, not to reject it outright. What I propose in this chapter is a set of close readings of Brunetière's judgments on literature and politics, going back to the late 1870s, in order to underline the remarkable consistency of his views across not only decades but ever-shifting topics of enquiry. I will start with *Le Roman Naturaliste*, looking at Brunetière's dogmatic critiques of Zola but also at his more favourable pronouncements on other authors such as Alphonse Daudet. What will emerge from these is the importance, years before Brunetière had ever heard of Alfred Dreyfus or converted to Catholicism (the two events most responsible for the increasing politicization of his discourse) of categories that would remain central to his thought at the time of the Affair. I will go on to analyze two other moments in Brunetière's career: the second of these is the Dreyfus Affair, but between this and the campaign against Zola's novels there is a crucial bridge, the form of his attacks on science in the early 1890s. Beginning with a review of Paul Bourget's controversial novel *Le Disciple* in 1889 and

[169] In Brunetière's case, his major institutional affiliations were director of the conservative literary and cultural review *La Revue des Deux Mondes* and professor at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, in other words guardian of the established order.

continuing through his conversion to Catholicism a few years later, Brunetière repeatedly denounced the failure of science to fulfill the promises made on its behalf earlier in the century, and found himself clashing once more with Zola, as well as other bannermen of positivism such as the chemist Marcellin Berthelot.

By affirming this continuity, Brunetière will stand out from Dreyfusards like Zola and Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, also explored in this thesis, who needed substantially to alter their aesthetic principles in formulating a political response to the crisis of the Affair, and also from the portraits of him sketched by Charle and Compagnon. This is not to say that my reading of him is incompatible with theirs, but that I hope to have underlined a different dimension of his thought. Charle's emphasis on institutions and the literary field makes for a convincing synthesis of the Affair as a whole, but it proves superfluous in the case of Brunetière. The consistency of his views from the 1870s on, long before being elected to the Académie or assuming the directorship of *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, indicates that the correlative relation Charle identifies between those positions and Brunetière's anti-Dreyfusism does not carry with it causality.

Compagnon's Brunetière was profoundly marked by a lecture tour of the United States (he also visited Quebec but found less to reflect on there) undertaken in early 1897, accounts of which he published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in November of that year, just as Zola was preparing to join battle on the Dreyfusard side. As with Charle, I suggest that going back to the earlier aesthetic texts offers evidence of greater continuity than Compagnon sees in Brunetière's denunciations of individualism during the Dreyfus Affair. Nevertheless, the American tour was without doubt a significant experience for Brunetière, exposing him to a political and educational model that would prove more powerful than France's in the century ahead. It might thus be

pointed to as the final step in the emergence of Brunetière's political consciousness, following the earlier denunciations of naturalism and positivism. In discussing the review of Zola's *Paris* that Brunetière published in April 1898, I will return to the points of agreement and difference between my and Compagnon's assessment's of Brunetière's career.

The first edition of *Le Roman Naturaliste*, Brunetière's collected essays on the eponymous school, appeared in 1883. Further amended editions, featuring both additions and subtractions, would follow in 1892 and 1896.[170] As a volume, it appears on many bibliographies thanks to the author's contemporary celebrity and the persistence of his opposition to Zola. Of the individual essays the best-known is probably 'La Banqueroute du Naturalisme', which first featured in *La Revue des Deux Mondes* on the 1st of September 1887. But despite its provocative title, the content can surprise the reader by its moderation and almost regretful tone. Brunetière has not (entirely) come to gloat; and his words are consistent with what he would later write in the preface to the second edition of the volume. Speaking of "l'idée qui fait le lien et…l'unité de ce recueil d'articles", he there announced that it was:

> Montrer…que nos naturalistes, en se servant du nom sous lequel ils se sont désignés, n'avaient pas le droit de la détourner de son sens…ce que j'appellerai le bon renom d'une grande doctrine d'art ; opposer les conditions d'un art vraiment naturaliste, qui sont : la probité de l'observation, la sympathie pour la souffrance, l'indulgence aux humbles, et la simplicité de l'exécution, aux caractères les plus généraux du naturalisme contemporain,

[170] one can measure the changes that the French literary field had undergone since 1883 by the lame pun on 'symbolisme' Brunetière uses to explain the new chapter disposition of the 1892 edition.

lesquels sont au contraire la superstition de « l'écriture artiste », le pessimisme littéraire, et la recherche de la grossièreté…[171]

These precepts are applied liberally in 'La Banqueroute du Naturalisme', but it is worth briefly dwelling on them in the abstract. The four pillars of *his* version of naturalism that Brunetière sets forth are; probity, sympathy, indulgence and stylistic simplicity. Of the four, three are ethical categories, with only the latter directly concerning language and style, and its position last in the list can be taken as a sign of its diminished importance. The relationship between ethics and style will reappear when I address Brunetière's review of *L'Evangéliste* by Daudet; that review's significance increases when one notes that it was added to *Le Roman Naturaliste* in the second edition, to show that "tout n'était pas perdu de l'effort du naturalisme".[172]

'La Banqueroute du Naturalisme' is a review of Zola's novel *La Terre*, an ambitious volume that critics then and now have largely agreed was a major failure.[173] Indeed his articles addressing Zola's fiction are more infrequent than one might think; they are limited to reviews of *La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret* in 1875, *Pot-Bouille* in 1882 and the article now concerning us, five years later – an article of 1880 on 'Le Roman Expérimental' is also directed at Zola, but in more theoretical vein as befits the subject. This means that Brunetière never attempted a denunciation of any of what now tend to be considered Zola's major works – *l'Assommoir*, *Germinal*, even *La Débâcle*. He would, however, return to a discussion of Zola's novels in the immediate aftermath

[171] Ferdinand Brunetière, *Le Roman Naturaliste* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1896), pp. II-III.
[172] ibid., p.II.
[173] For an incisive analysis of how Zola's use of free indirect style in *La Terre* embodies its decline in quality compared to *Germinal* two years earlier, see Roy Pascal, *The Dual Voice* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1977), pp. 114-122.

of the Affair, when *Paris* came out a few weeks after Zola's trial (having been delayed beyond it in the vain hope of letting adverse publicity pass).[174]

In 'La Banqueroute du Naturalisme', Brunetière explains this infrequency in characteristically mordant fashion : « Ce n'est pas que nous ne les ayons pas lus [*the four novels between* Pot-Bouille *and* La Terre], ainsi qu'il était de notre devoir; mais, après les avoir lus, nous n'en avions trouvé rien à dire que nous n'eussions déjà dit ».[175] However, Alain Pagès has convincingly pointed out that, in truth, Brunetière had found himself marginalized in critical discourse about naturalism in the five years that had elapsed, as Jules Lemaître's partial revalorization of *Les Rougon-Macquart* as "une épopée pessimiste de l'animalité humaine" changed the paradigm of the discussion. For Pagès, Brunetière's already-established position of enunciation was erased by this shift, and only Zola's apparent attempt to remake *L'Assommoir* with peasants rather than workers allowed *La Revue des Deux Mondes'* director to return to familiar polemical ground.[176] In either case, the critic rapidly enumerates the failings of Zola's against which he will continue to rail: "Mêmes Quenu-Gradelle et mêmes Rougon-Macquart; mêmes procédés; même absence aussi de sens moral",[177] describing the author as "cet homme de quelque talent, mais de si peu de gout et de tact, et d'encore moins d'esprit".[178] Brunetière's review of *La Terre* is presented as his final word on a man who has forsaken the bounds "de la décence, du naturel, et de la vérité".

---

[174] Henri Mitterand, *Zola* v.III, p.393.
[175] Brunetière, *Le Roman Naturaliste,* p.323.
[176] "Ce qui est extrêmement clair : le critique de la *Revue des Deux Mondes* avoue que l'interprétation épique des *Rougon-Macquart* (celle de Lemaître) exclut la sienne, et qu'il lui est impossible de prendre la parole tant que celle-ci domine… » (Pagès, *La Bataille Littéraire,* p.209)
[177] Brunetière, *Le Roman Naturaliste,* p.323.
[178] ibid., p.324.

One must be cautious in approaching Brunetière's critique of Zolian naturalism. His relentless focus on morality can seem irrelevant to current methods of literary analysis, more befitting an op-ed piece in a right-wing newspaper than the thoughts of a professional scholar of literature. The standards for what can shock in the arts have progressed so far beyond anything found in *Les Rougon-Macquart* that its impact on contemporary minds is a challenge to reconstruct. Yet Brunetière's was a mainstream reaction to Zolian aesthetics, albeit one couched in particularly steep levels of casuistry and dogmatism, and he spoke with the authority of a member of the Académie Française and professor at the Collège de France (the latter despite his own lack of a university education).

To marginalize the significance of his arguments against Zola would be to diminish our ability to understand how the early Third Republic understood the role of literature in its cultural and social politics. It must also be noted that many of Brunetière's apparently moralistic motives for attacking Zola's oeuvre are founded on the same rules his target used to defend those novels. Both sides of the debate around naturalism had thoroughly rejected the doctrine of "l'art pour l'art" that had predominated in the 1850s and 1860s.[179] That on which they disagreed was the manner in which art could best accomplish its social function, not the question of whether it should have one to begin with. It is partly for this reason that a translation of aesthetic concerns into the political realm could be so readily effected during the Dreyfus Affair.

As with his article on 'Les Petits Naturalistes' three years before, Brunetière uses a comparison with vaudeville to deprecate the writing being analyzed. Here, he casts *La Terre* as a compendium of « tous les effets faciles et violents, tous ceux du vaudeville et ceux du

[179] Théophile Gautier expressed it most trenchantly in the journal *L'Artiste* in 1857, and the Parnassian poets would make it a mainstay of French literary thought in the following years.

mélodrame ». For Brunetière there are few ways to skin the literary cat. Any writing that does not fit his vision of a well-crafted and edifying text is cast into the fire reserved for the most devalued styles, such as vaudeville and melodrama. One can immediately note that both are theatrical in nature. They also both featured music at some point in their development, although by the 19th century the French *vaudeville* (to be distinguished from the American music-hall tradition which was beginning to flourish when Brunetière wrote his article) had abandoned the use of music in its productions.[180] Nevertheless, what both still shared was a reliance on stock characters and titillating situations, on plotting which answered to its own norms rather than fidelity to the external world. Gustave Vapereau, a few years earlier in his *Dictionnaire Universel des Littératures*, had described the development of vaudeville as follows: "il tourna à l'excentricité, cherchant avant tout un titre extraordinaire, s'adaptant à la personne et aux tics d'un acteur en vogue, et entassant dans un imbroglio inextricable les quiproquos les plus burlesques et les situations les plus risquées". 'Excentricités', 'tics', 'imbroglio', 'burlesque': these were the associations that Brunetière was activating by comparing Zola's novels to vaudeville. The musical aspect further serves to differentiate both from the genres of high tragedy or the sermon, for which Brunetière reserved some of his highest praise.

As would be the case for Céard during the Dreyfus Affair, 'La Banqueroute du Naturalisme' provides evidence of an opponent of Zola's turning the novelist's compositional method against him and attempting to underline a gap between his claims and actual practices. These arguments rely on a clear hierarchy and formal demarcation of the different literary genres for their efficacy. Without an understanding of what makes a vaudeville a vaudeville, Brunetière's undermining of *La Terre* cannot proceed. It also underlines the critic's equal

[180] Gustave Vapereau, *Dictionnaire Universel des Littératures* (Paris: Hachette,1876), p.2018 .

commitment to *vérité* as an aesthetically valorized ideal, matching Zola's own reverence for the term. The challenge of differentiating the two men lies, in large part, in an exegesis of this word – understanding exactly what Brunetière meant by *vérité* is the key to apprehending his aesthetics.

He rapidly gives a negative example to help the reader grasp his position, outlining with sustained sarcasm his take on Zola's approach to building the novel: « au moyen des journaux, des faits divers et des comptes rendus de cours d'assises, au moyen des commentaires dont les « chroniqueurs judiciaires » ne manquent jamais à les faire suivre – pour opposer, comme l'on sait, la dépravation cynique des campagnes à l'honnête, élégante, et inoffensive corruption du boulevard – M. Zola s'est fait une idée du paysan français, et composé méthodiquement un dossier d'horreurs villageoises. »[181] Brunetière is settling scores with another section of the journalistic profession, contrasting the implied probity of his *Revue* with the "honnête, élégante et inoffensive corruption" of the boulevard – which here refers metonymically to those daily journalists who patrolled it in the period, seeking leads and contacts to fill their columns. Such "chroniqueurs" see themselves branded with scornful quotation marks under Brunetière's pen. We see a foreshadowing of Henry Céard's Dreyfus-era attacks against Zola. The idea that the man of Médan's documents are tarnished by the sources from which they are derived will return as an argument against 'J'Accuse...!", but it was already extant in the heyday of naturalism.

In both cases honour and probity are essential to the critique. As Céard would come to suggest of Zola's Dreyfusard allies, Brunetière asserts that the raw materials of *La Terre* are laced with impurities by the dissolute scribes chiefly responsible for providing them. These reservations are significant; they manifest a concern with testimony that is far from trivial.

[181] Brunetière, *Le Roman Naturaliste,* p.327.

Anatole France, who would become a vital Zola ally during the Affair, himself wrote a negative review of *La Terre* in which he accused Zola of having utterly misrepresented French peasants: "Rien, dans ces pages d'un pseudo-naturaliste, ne révèle l'observation directe. On n'y sent vivre ni l'homme ni la nature. Les figures y sont peintes par des procédés d'école qui semblent aujourd'hui bien vieux."[182] Even though France and Brunetière themselves were pursuing a bitter quarrel at this time,[183] their attacks on *La Terre* were closely akin.

Brunetière, for his part, displays a rare dash of comedy with a *mise en scène*: "Le romancier, d'un air entendu, frappe de la main sur ses dossiers ; et les *reporters*, sur sa parole, nous jurent qu'il n'a rien avancé qu'il ne puisse prouver, en forme de preuve authentique, et dont ne témoigne la collection du *Gil Blas* ou du *Figaro* ».[184] As pleasing as the image of Zola brandishing his files to an eager public of reporters may be, the claim underlying it is one of collusion between the novelist and the daily print media. The charge highlights a trend very evident in the later *Rougon-Macquart*s, which is Zola's increasingly theatrical staging of his preliminary research and the ever-escalating levels of launch hype for new volumes in the cycle.[185] What Brunetière attempts to do with his imagined press conference is to set up a closed loop between the novelist and the press men (one of whom Zola used to be, as many readers would have known) which excludes the general public and may in fact be a conspiracy to defraud them.

The latter idea emerges as Brunetière goes on to ask « de qui se moque-t-on ici? De nous ou de M. Zola ?...le peu de vérité qu'il y a dans *La Terre* est banal, pour traîner partout ; et le peu

---

[182] Anatole France, *La Vie Littéraire*, première série (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1921), p.228.
[183] R.J. Berg has devoted a book to the subject: *La Querelle des Critiques en France à la Fin du XIXème Siècle* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990).
[184] Brunetière, *Le Roman Naturaliste,* p.328.
[185] In preparing 1891's *La Bête Humaine*, Zola took a much-publicized ride on a locomotive and was photographed waving to the crowd at its conclusion, having briefly operated the engine's controls en route.

de nouveauté qu'on y rencontre n'est pas vrai ».[186] The boldness of this assertion is intensified by his subsequent admission that « ce n'est pas que je connaisse assez le paysan pour m'en faire une idée très précise ». However, such knowledge is implied to be unnecessary for one to take a stand against Zola's own presentation of his peasants, since, crucially, "si le paysan, comme l'ouvrier, par exemple, comme le bourgeois, ou comme le militaire, ont quelques traits qui ne soient qu'à eux, ils ne laissent pas, tous tant qu'ils sont, d'en avoir aussi quelques-uns qui leur sont communs entre eux, et avec moi ».[187] This is the core of Brunetière's consistent opposition to Zolian naturalism; that the search for literary truth is being conducted in the wrong place. In significant ways this position anticipates the critic's attack on anti-Semitism in the Dreyfus Affair article 'Après le Procès', which will be discussed below. In both cases, he seeks to displace a concept commonly associated with one side of the debate to the other; in 1898, it would be the association between anti-Dreyfusism and anti-Semitism, with the claim that the modern science contextually tied to Dreyfus' defenders (such as Emile Duclaux) was in fact responsible for hatred of Jews. It dubiously divided the world's inhabitants into races to be judged separately, and opened up the space necessary for individual races to be discriminated against.

In 'La Banqueroute du Naturalisme', Brunetière's reasoning is structurally analogous to what he would deploy 11 years later. As with the ethnographic science attacked in 'Après le Procès', Zola's documentary method is portrayed as fundamentally divisive in nature, carving up society into a succession of stock types that allows each class to be stigmatized and pathologized in turn. This, for Brunetière, is not naturalism because it leans toward the contingent and exceptional, rather than the universal traits that bind humanity together. When he bemoans

[186] Brunetière, *Le Roman Naturaliste,*p.328.
[187] ibid., pp. 328-9.

Zola's lack of 'sens moral', it is important to recognize that this is not the knee-jerk reaction of a rattled prude.

Le Roman Naturaliste's author does, of course, scorn what he sees as his contemporary's excesses of bad taste and obscenity. But such a rejection forms a small part of a broader system of moral thought that conceives of literature as existing in functional opposition to positivism. Its value, for Brunetière, lies precisely in its ability to do what science cannot – to unite men by a revelation of their common features. In both the quarrel of naturalism and the Dreyfus Affair, the true enemy for the critic is positivistic science, and it was Zola's association with that enterprise (methodological in the *Rougon-Macquart*s, social in the Dreyfus Affair) that brought him into Brunetière's sights.

The key differentiation between Zola's literary outlook and Brunetière's own is sympathy.

> Avec le gout et le sens moral, ce qui lui manque le plus, c'est la sympathie, et sans la sympathie, sans cette faculté précieuse, délicate et subtile, n'y ayant pas moyen d'enfoncer un peu avant dans la connaissance de nos semblables, il n'y a pas moyen non plus d'être naturaliste. On ne saurait trop le redire: c'est ici ce que n'ont pas compris nos modernes naturalistes, Flaubert en tête, M. Zola derrière lui, ni leurs nombreux imitateurs ; et c'est ce qui fait sur eux la si grande supériorité des naturalistes russes et anglais, d'un Tolstoï, d'un Dostoïewsky, de Dickens, de George Eliot.[188]

Brunetière's fondness for Flaubert barely exceeded his feelings for Zola; he conceded the excellence of *Madame Bovary* but was particularly severe for every novel that followed it. For

[188] ibid., pp. 329-30.

him, Croisset and Médan were the headquarters of « véritables mandarins de lettres, infatués…de la supériorité de l'art d'écrire sur celui de fabriquer de la toile ou de cultiver la terre, uniquement attentifs à « soigner », comme on dit, leur réputation et leur vente ».[189] As with the criticism of Zola's documents, questions of the social order and its harmony are paramount. They are mimetic of the failings Brunetière finds within the novels themselves, showing the depth of the critic's convictions. He sees sympathy as a form of resonating device that allows an author to penetrate beneath the skin of a character and understand their core: "manque de sympathie pour autre chose qu'eux-mêmes, c'est ainsi que leur observation, quand encore ils daignaient observer, n'a pas pénétré plus avant que l'écorce des choses".[190]

It is on this basis that Brunetière returns to the comparison of Zolian naturalism with vaudeville. Yet he goes further than in previous articles in which the two styles were compared :

> Ce que je tiens à dire, parce que je n'en aurai jamais, je crois, de meilleure occasion que *La Terre*, c'est que ce comique involontaire s'obtient précisément grâce à l'insuffisance de l'observation. Les personnages de M. Zola, les moins complexes, les plus simples du monde, n'obéissant jamais qu'à l'impulsion d'un unique appétit…traversent le roman avec l'allure raide et uniforme, les tics mécaniques et les gestes anguleux d'un fantoche ; et le comique naît, irrésistible et énorme, du contraste même entre les situations violentes où le romancier les jette, et l'immobilité de leur physionomie ou la gaucherie de leurs mouvements.[191]

[189] ibid., p.330.
[190] ibid., p. 331.
[191] ibid., pp. 331-2.

Examples of this tendency in Zola's writing are, he claims, the Boches in *l'Assommoir*, Trublot in *Pot-Bouille*, as well as, from *La Terre* itself, a host of characters including Fouan, Buteau and Palmyre.

This characterization of Zola, assessing which lies well beyond our present concerns, introduces a tension with the critique of science Brunetière has already introduced. For he goes on to state that « si son procédé ne laisse pas d'avoir quelques inconvénients, on en voit peut-être le grand avantage. Les mêmes mannequins peuvent toujours servir ; et, de « bourgeois » qu'ils étaient dans *Pot-Bouille*, ou de « mineurs » dans *Germinal*, les transformer en « paysans » dans *la Terre*, ce n'est qu'une redingote à changer en une blouse, un nom propre en un autre, et aussi le titre du roman ».[192] This is at odds with the prior claim that Zola's novels were too socially divisive and over-emphasized the differences between various social strata.

The paradox of the Brunetièrian critique of Zola's method is that he himself employs social categories as an element to establish them. Thus, in an attempt to move beyond the standard shocked responses to the curses and idioms Zola places in his characters' mouths, 'La Banqueroute du Naturalisme' features an extended discussion of why the same vulgar words, printed out for the bourgeois readership, do not have the same effects that they do on a working class which uses them "presque sans le savoir". « Et c'est bien plus qu'une distinction de rhétorique, c'est une nuance de psychologie, si l'on considère, après le pouvoir propre, la valeur relative des mots ».[193] As a result of the dislocation between the significations of words like « foutu » (or "f…" for Brunetière, displaying his impeccable appreciation of bourgeois sensibilities) for the worker and the bourgeois, "ils [*the curses in question*] associent…les

[192] ibid., p.333.
[193] ibid., p.337.

sentiments qu'ils sont censés traduire à des sentiments souvent très éloignés de ceux du personnage que le romancier fait parler".[194]

Brunetière is appealing to the classical rhetorical concept of *decorum* (or 'bienséance' in the French classical flourishing of the seventeenth century), demanding that the novelist adapt his words to the audience and express what might actually have been said "dans la langue du commun et de l'honnête usage". Understanding Brunetière as a classical aestheticist explains his refashioning of naturalism in the image of the great writers of that time. Indeed Brunetière gave a lecture at the Sorbonne entitled 'Le naturalisme au XVIIème siècle' in which he did just that, arguing for a 'true' naturalism in the works of writers such as Racine, whose searching examination of human nature he lauded. Zola has done none of this. Rather, « plus il prêchait le *naturalisme*, plus il retournait au *romantisme*, d'où il était sorti, d'ailleurs, et dans lequel il finira ».[195] An accusation of romanticism from Brunetière was, if anything, worse than one of naturalism: the confusion and inflation that he viewed Hugo and others as having brought into the French language (and in this, in fact, he agreed rather closely with Zola himself, no lover of the long-term consequences of the Romantics' success) were the furthest remove from classical acuity in his conception of literature. The atavistic Romantic Zola and his followers, then, practise a divisive brand of writing that seeks truth in abstract methodology rather than through sympathy for their objects of study.

One must not overstate the parallels between 'La Banqueroute du Naturalisme' and 'Après le Procès'. Their strongest commonality – a morally-grounded anti-scientism opposing sympathy and unity to the cleavages introduced to human conscience by modern science –

[194] ibid., p.338.
[195] ibid., p.341.

actually indicates that Brunetière had few direct grievances with Zola's actions of late 1897 and early 1898. Rather it was his association with the champions of the scientific method during this period that caused him to be the object of a new 'discours de combat' in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* - although by placing the man Dreyfus above the interests of France, Zola had committed another misstep in Brunetiere's eyes. His concern was never with Zola as an individual. The matter of substance for Brunetière, in whatever subject he was treating, was the subject matter's conformity to or divergence from his views on aesthetics and society. Brunetière is perfectly happy to concede that Zola has some talent as a writer,[196] but this never counts in the final analysis because it is misused.

The consistency of these views over a period of decades is striking. It marks Brunetière as a form of largely anti-establishment reactionary thinker. Despite his fall from institutional grace as anticlerical Republicans consolidated their hold on the nation's institutions after 1899,[197] and his conversion to Catholicism, Brunetière remained distinct from other currents of thought on the right either during the Affair or after it. He joined the Ligue de la Patrie Française at its inception, but quickly left when it became clear that it would not share his refusal to endorse anti-Semitism. Despite becoming a Catholic he irked the church hierarchy with his persistence in advocating faith- and not reason-based arguments while proselytizing.[198] The ability to combine an irascible streak of contrarianism with a lengthy commitment to his core beliefs is what marks Brunetière out as one of the late 19th century's foremost thinkers in France. Yet, as will be seen,

[196] For instance, in reviewing Bourget's *Le Disciple*, a work he otherwise lauds far above any of Zola's, as will later be seen, he mildly faults Bourget for his characters' relative lack of vivacity: "Ses personnages, beaucoup moins simples, - et plus vrais comme tels -, sont cependant moins "reels" que ceux de M. Daudet, par exemple, ou de M. Zola… (*La Revue des Deux Mondes* [July 1 1889], p.217).
[197] See Compagnon, *Connaissez-Vous Brunetière?* pp. 193-216, for a detailed account of the political manoeuvres by which Brunetière was forced out of the reorganized university system in the wake of the Affair - and the extent to which the crisis' political realignments determined this exclusion.
[198] ibid., pp. 176-86.

when the focus is shifted back from his political writing to aesthetics, the latent politics of the latter can at times be more nationalist, more Barrèsian, in its themes than were Brunetière's overt efforts to make political statements.

Eric Cahm has argued for a categorical difference between the moderate anti-Dreyfusism of the Republic's ruling elite during the Affair, and the virulent rhetoric of those on the far right, such as Edouard Drumont.[199] While the latter's condemnation of Dreyfusard activities stemmed from an affirmation of belief in Dreyfus' culpability as Jew (for Barrès, the captain's race was sufficient to establish his guilt), governmental anti-Dreyfusards were primarily concerned with the perturbations the campaign for revision would have on French society. Brunetière appears to occupy an uneasy position somewhere between these two poles, condemning *La France Juive* but allowing bigoted views space in his critical writing. Similarly, his views on patriotism are moderate to a nicety; he laments in 'Après le Procès' « c'est de l'humanité même qu'il y va dans la question de l'antisémitisme, mais qui s'intéresse de nos jours à l'humanité ? quelques rêveurs peut-être, et il n'y a guère d'idée plus décriée ! Au contraire, je ne pense pas qu'il y ait de Français qui ne s'intéresse à la France ; et c'est vraiment de la France qu'il y va dans l'incompatibilité qu'on a prétendu découvrir entre les exigences de la démocratie et l'existence même des armées ».[200] In other words, a universalism of thought would be preferable, but is a practical impossibility. At the same time, each national literature is particularly suited to exposing certain dimensions of this universal, and the national interest is a far more reliable motivator. This is why Zola is such a conspicuous failure. French literature is, in Brunetière's analysis, fundamentally social, and in Bondy's accurate summing-up "étant donné aussi que c'est aux époques où elle a été vraiment sociale qu'elle a exercé une hégémonie incontestée sur les

[199] Cahm, *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, pp.119-20.
[200] *La Revue des Deux Mondes (* March 15 1898), p.433.

autres littératures, l'écrivain français a le devoir de sacrificier quelques tendances qu'il puisse avoir à l'individualisme ».[201]

As in the case of 'La Banqueroute du Naturalisme', it is precisely Zola and Flaubert's individualist glorification of their own profession and status over that of their characters that blights their output in Brunetière's eyes. The critic perhaps explored the interaction between authorial pride and the global function of literature most fully in his *Manuel de l'Histoire de la Littérature Française*: « La socialisation de la littérature, si j'ose hasarder ce barbarisme expressif, c'est ce qui nous a permis dans le passé…d'exercer dans le monde la domination intellectuelle que nous y avons exercée plus souvent qu'aucun peuple. – Qui ne sacrifierait à ce généreux idéal un peu de son « individualisme », et l'étrange vanité d'être seul à s'admirer ou à se comprendre lui-même ? ».[202]

Individualism, intellectualism, and the failings of naturalism form a nexus in Brunetière's thought. There is a telescopic effect here which allows him to move rapidly from the psychological diagnosis of a man like Flaubert's failings, through his literature, to the international cultural resonance of his works. Brunetière describes Zola in 'La Banqueroute du Naturalisme' as "ce romantique égaré parmi nous », and presumably foresees the same fate for the author of *Les Rougon-Macquart* as « la plupart de nos romantiques [qui] n'existent au regard de l'étranger. On a mieux qu'eux en leur genre en Angleterre ou en Allemagne ! ».[203] Ethics and aesthetics meet through the concept of an individual author's need to conform to the apposite cultural standard existing in his field (in the French case, "socialisation"), and through Brunetière's portrayal of failures to do so as moral lapses. He would maintain this central belief

[201] Louis Joseph Bondy, *Le Classicisme de Ferdinand Brunetière* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1930), p.74.
[202] Brunetière, *Manuel de l'Histoire de la Littérature Française* (Paris: Delagrave, 1899), pp. 523-4.
[203] ibid., pp. 522-3.

until his death, distilling it into the maxim "l'homme naturel est l'homme social"[204] in his final work *Honoré de Balzac*.

Brunetière, as stressed above, shared neither the overt anti-Semitism nor the anti-Republicanism of a Maurras. These were precisely the points which drove his rapid exit from the Ligue de la Patrie Française in early 1899, after he alienated Barrès and most of its other leaders by declaring to *Le Temps* that "Nous repoussons...avec énergie la doctrine antisémite et nationaliste".[205] However, he held just as strong a belief in the importance of tradition to each individual's actions as either Maurras or Barrès – but with a transposition from the political to the literary realm.

If Barrès embodies a French version of the far-right ideology of blood and soil (through his doctrine of "la terre et les morts"), Brunetière's formulation is more like blood and paper. Two years before 'Après le Procès', Brunetière explained that "un chef-d'oeuvre, un vrai chef-d'oeuvre…c'est la source limpide, c'est le miroir inaltérable où plusieurs générations de Français se sont, l'une après l'autre, reconnues et complues en soi. Oui, faites-y bien attention, le petit rire sarcastique de Voltaire, c'est nous…le rire plus franc, plus large et plus sain de Molière, c'est encore nous…l'éloquence de Bossuet, c'est nous…et la passion dont la flamme brûle encore dans les tragédies de Racine, c'est nous, toujours nous ».[206] Brunetière anticipates Barrès' conception of « l'énergie nationale », but his notion of heritage stays on the printed page, not in a Frenchman's family tree. Yet the mechanism is the same; through a contemplation of the predecessors being championed, whether textual or human, the individual comes to understand their Frenchness in a process of recognizing shared traits, shared history and shared sentiments.

---

[204] Brunetière, *Honoré de Balzac* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1906), p.188.
[205] 1st of January 1899. Cited in Compagnon, *Connaissez-Vous Brunetière?*, p.178.
[206] Brunetière , *Discours de Combat,* première série (Paris: Perrin, 1900), pp. 140-1.

This matters for two reasons. The first is that the complex relationship between the often subtly different currents of anti-Dreyfusard thought remains in some need of critical attention, and Brunetière and Barrès unquestionably represent two of the major varieties. The second is the different light it sheds on our understanding of Brunetière's thinking itself. He has often been portrayed as a cold rationalist, particularly when his 1880s polemics with the 'impressionist' critics (notably Anatole France) are discussed. Yet we can see that feeling and recognition ultimately occupy pride of place in his aesthetics; his recurrent moralism relies on some form of emotion rather than naked logic. It makes Brunetière's attachment to the republic all the more remarkable, in view of his departure from the rationalism it was taken to embody in the political and intellectual climate of the time, as the inheritor of the values of 1789 and the proponent of a neo-Kantianism that became orthodoxy in its schools.

Reading Brunetière on Zola in conjunction with 'Après le Procès' is revealing, but as indicated *Le Roman Naturaliste* also contains a positive strain of criticism. Two reviews of novels by Alphonse Daudet – first *Les Rois en Exil* in 1879 then *L'Evangéliste* in 1884 – exhibit ideas not to be found in the critiques of the *Rougon-Macquart*. In the former, Brunetière takes two full pages to get to Daudet or mention his new novel, situating it with respect to the idea that the naturalist school headed by Zola is undergoing a crisis. Right away, then, the value of reading Daudet is yoked to an understanding of Zola and naturalism; whatever the critic can discover about *Les Rois en Exil* will be interesting principally because it will indirectly explicate both the *Rougon-Macquart* and, more importantly, the aesthetics they are coming to embody. The current crisis[207] will surely stimulate new veins of writing in the novel. However, they will

[207] whose nature is unclear now – naturalism had only become a prominent school in the previous couple of years, following the success of *l'Assommoir*, so for Brunetière to call it in crisis in 1879, before the publication of either *Nana* or *Les Soirées de Médan*, is curious. The clearer 'crisis' moments of naturalism were Huysmans' publication

not be provided by Zola, since « ce n'est pas une originalité suffisante que d'étaler au grand jour ce que le commun des hommes dissimule soigneusement ».[208] The earlier part of this chapter underlines how "le commun des hommes" should be understood as the significant part of this criticism, not the "étalage" more usually dwelt on.

For all Daudet's literary qualities, Brunetière is unconvinced by the subtitle *Roman d'histoire moderne* he affixes to his creation. It leads the critic to ponder "qu'est-ce qu'un roman d'histoire?", and the answer emerges as a harmful paradox. Taking up a central episode from the book's plot, Brunetière remarks that attempting to source curious events such as a king's mistress leaving her restaurant tryst with the monarch "costumée tout de blanc, en gâte-sauce" in real life creates a confusion of genres within the text. It becomes neither historical, since the names and contexts have been changed, nor truly novelistic, since its hypostasis remains a *fait divers*, not the author's thought. "Est-ce un roman que [le lecteur] a là sous les yeux, ou si c'est une satire? Une copie du réel, ou une imitation du vrai ? ».[209] Copying reality does not fulfill the proper role of the novel since, with reference to the slightly caricatural details of the duc de Rosen's portrait by Daudet, « nous demandons au romancier de trouver un certain accord du physique et du moral de ses personnages, et c'est même un peu parce que, dans la réalité quotidienne, autour de nous, nous ne rencontrons pas cet accord, que nous lisons des romans ».[210] Didacticism takes precedence over accuracy of description; for Brunetière, 'le vrai' and 'le réel' are not only sharply distinguished, but the former is always to be sought, even at the expense of the latter. It may not be 'réel' to have a loyal retainer display the probity and fidelity

---

of *A Rebours* in 1884 and the so-called 'Manifeste des Cinq' of 1887, both well after the time at which Brunetière was writing.

[208] Brunetière, *Le Roman Naturaliste,* p.76

[209] ibid., p.78.

[210] ibid., p.78.

that define him morally in his facial traits, but the instructional power of the 'vrai' it represents matters more.

Once more we find ourselves transported back to the 17th century. Brunetière, although he does not explicitly invoke classical aesthetics in the text, is discussing its concept of 'vraisemblance', the idea that what works as 'real' in a work of art (at the time, tragedy) is not necessarily the historical record, but rather events and details that fit with the logic and the tone of the work itself. We have seen that he used a version of 'bienséance' to attack Zola's choice of language in *La Terre*, so both the key notions behind the aesthetics of classical tragedy are to the fore when he highlights the failings of 19th-century naturalism.

I would suggest that, although Brunetière is at pains to avoid any real discussion of Dreyfus' guilt or innocence in 1898, this argument of almost 20 years before is a strong guide to his perspective on the issue. Taken with his attacks on individualism, we can understand the question of innocence as a 'réel' detail in Brunetière's mind that is secondary to the 'vrai' represented by the nation's interest as a whole. It is saying nothing new to identify the conflict between individual rights and the interests of the nation as a central factor in the Dreyfus Affair. But it has not sufficiently been stressed that these concerns also structured aesthetic debates around naturalism long before any of the men of letters concerned had ever heard of Alfred Dreyfus. Singular vs. collective truth is as important a binary to the contemporary reception of naturalism as it is to the discourse of the Dreyfus Affair.

To demarcate Daudet from Zola, Brunetière gives his writing a different 'ism': "Ce qui est douteux, c'est que M. Daudet soit un romancier dans le sens ordinaire du mot; ce qui est certain, c'est qu'il est un artiste, et c'est qu'il est un poète. Et c'est ce mélange en lui de l'artiste

et du poète que j'essaie de caractériser d'un trait, quand je l'appelle un *impressionniste* dans le roman ».[211] This renaming is a concise two-pronged attack on Zola's critical work. The first point is the shifting of a man frequently labelled as a peer and ally of Zola's into another category, disassociating him from the naturalist school in which Zola himself had already placed Daudet by devoting a chapter of his volume 'Les Romanciers Naturalistes' to the Provencal. The second is indirect; by calling Daudet's novels impressionistic, Brunetière drives a wedge between the school of painting bearing the same name and Zola's important role in clearing the way for its credibility. Without Zola's passionate defence of Manet in the 1860s, the younger painters who followed would have struggled even more to assert themselves in the Parisian art world.

The critic defends his choice of noun by claiming that any 'ism' acquires and loses meaning only through synchronic processes; "*classicisme* et *romantisme* aussi ne nous représentent rien aujourd'hui. Mais ils représentaient des idées vers 1830, et des idées entre lesquelles depuis lors le siècle a fait son choix…Le mot d'*impressionnisme*, à son tour, disparaîtra, mais, en attendant, pour l'heure présente, il signifie quelque chose…N'y attachez donc aucun préjugé favorable ou défavorable, et tachez plutôt comme on dit, de le vider de son contenu ».[212] The point is somewhat confused. If it already means something to the reader, surely that resides in precisely the content Brunetière is urging them to evacuate from it. However it seems that the entreaty is being made in order to preserve the rights of criticism to define and redefine concepts based on the thinker's own system and independently of commonly-accepted usages of a given term, something it is no surprise at all to read Brunetière championing: "Vous

[211] ibid., p.78. As we have seen, this attitude will change once Brunetière comes to include the article in *Le Roman Naturaliste*: rather than continuing to describe Daudet with a new term, he reaffirms the validity of 'naturalisme'.
[212] ibid., pp.82-3.

ne les [*such concepts*] expulserez pas de l'usage avant que les oeuvres, et la critique, aient décidé ce qu'il enferme d'erreur ou de vérité".[213] These statements give an insight into Brunetière's reasons for veiling his commitment to classical aesthetics under another name: he concedes the death of 'classicisme' as a relevant concept earlier in the 19th century, and is thus seeking to reintroduce its principles under a banner that can still seduce the readers of his time.

Certain stylistic traits in *Les Rois en Exil* draw Brunetière's praise, notably the frequency of sentences missing verbs, and the tactical use of demonstrative adjectives. The citation he uses to illustrate the latter point illuminates his true reasons for thinking so fondly of Daudet's writing. It is a simple noun phrase, "cette attitude de mère passionnée", that Daudet uses to describe the novel's Queen Frédérique. For Brunetière, « l'adjectif démonstratif, justifiant ici tout à fait son nom, distingue expressément de tous les autres traits du même genre, le trait, ou plutôt le contour, que le peintre veut mettre en lumière ; ainsi : « *Cette* attitude de mère passionnée », c'est-à-dire l'attitude par excellence, et non pas une attitude quelconque de mère passionnée ».[214] One could be forgiven for wondering how many passionate mothers' physiognomies Brunetière had made it his business to inspect. Yet underlying the slightly comical choice of example is an absolutely central concern of his aesthetics. We have seen that his criticisms of *La Terre* rest principally on a polarized opposition between the individual and the general, with the preference always accorded to the latter for its didactic potency. Here, Daudet's stylistics are said to serve the purpose of lifting the particulars of *Les Rois en Exil*'s narrative into exemplarity.[215] Clearly, then, these same stylistics are being subordinated to ethics

[213] ibid., pp.82-3.
[214] ibid., p.86.
[215] This contrasts, for instance, with de Bouhélier's naturist maxim that "toute attitude est héroique" (cited in Andriès de Rosa, *Saint-Georges de Bouhélier et le Naturisme* (Paris: Vanier, 1910), p.22). Brunetière and de Bouhélier's aesthetics both prized the idealized presentation of 'attitudes', the difference being that Brunetière saw no value in showing those of commoners.

in Brunetière's thought. Technical features of the novelist's art tend to be assessed for whether they can allow the novel to serve the edifying purpose he demands of it, rather than for any purely literary effects.

The same principle underlies his praise of Daudet's metaphoric techniques. As he puts it, « tout au long du roman, sentiments et pensées sont traduits dans le langage de la sensation ».[216] He highlights several metaphors from the text, all of which relate an emotion experienced by the character to a sense-impression such as "un feu flambant clair après une marche au grand froid". The value of this is in its representing « une sensation que tout le monde aura quelque chance d'avoir éprouvée ».[217] Conversely, describing a monk as « noir et sec comme une caroube » falls flat for Brunetière, simply because « tout le monde n'a pas vu des "caroubes", ni, je pense, n'est tenu d'en avoir vu ».[218] One the one hand such a perspective on literature is resolutely democratic. Authors have an audience that must be respected and spoken to on its own terms, and the better this is accomplished the higher the author, as a technician, rises in Brunetière's favour. On the other, the reductive boundaries thus imposed on the writing process could be called claustrophobic. In either case, the democratization of the novel is of a conservative nature, by its attachment to a status quo that forbids even the use of unusual metaphors.[219]

The overlap of these ideas with the moderate anti-Dreyfusism of 'Après le Procès' is conspicuous. The critique of modern science and its work of individuation found in that article

---

[216] ibid., p.83.
[217] ibid., p.87.
[218] ibid., p.87.
[219] Although to do so in full would require stepping far outside the bounds of this discussion, it is interesting to consider this democratic approach to style in conjunction with Jacques Rancière's present-day analyses of 19th century literary democracy. For Rancière, authors (most notably Flaubert) from the period mirrored the increasing democratization of French society by opening their works to lower social classes, to previously unacknowledged desires, and to descriptive modes that allowed the inanimate world an important place in the text: literature moved away from being a description of the social elite and their sentiments. Jacques Rancière, *Politique de la Littérature* (Paris: Galilée,2007), pp. 69-78 and *passim*.

forms the other versant of the approbation given to Daudet's writing in 'L'Impressionnisme dans le Roman'. By synergizing the emotions of the characters with experiences accessible to almost any reader, a novel like *Les Rois en Exil* can be a force for social harmony just as the army can (in Brunetière's romanticized presentation), through the inclusion in its ranks of men from every constituency of France. At the same time, the communicative commitment demanded of the author mirrors the failings with which Brunetière charges the 'intellectuels' in 1898 (and, before that, literary mandarins such as Flaubert and Zola, as has been shown); a supercilious detachment from the concerns and knowledge of those to whom they should be transmitting their ideas. Thus, both aesthetically and politically, Brunetière exemplifies a particular brand of conservative democracy.

This analysis contrasts with the conclusion the critic himself draws from his argument, which is that « nous pourrons définir déjà l'impressionnisme littéraire : une transposition systématique des moyens d'expression d'un art, qui est l'art de peindre, dans le domaine d'un autre art, qui est l'art d'écrire ».[220] In my view little of what Brunetière discusses previously fits this definition of Daudet's style. The equation of metaphorizing emotions as sense-impressions with any pictorial technique is problematic since painting can, of course, cogently represent only one class of these, the visual. And for the use of the demonstrative adjective, an analogy from the visual arts seems particularly elusive (Brunetière provides none). This dislocation between development and conclusion evinces the distorting effect of Brunetière's principles; his moralism is inconsistently applied, and he retains the desire to conclude on a purely artistic note, speaking of the relationship between literature and the visual arts, even if that conclusion is inconsistent with what has preceded it.

[220] ibid., p.87.

Perhaps the natural tendency when discussing literature and morality is to emphasize the most outraged responses to texts that were shocking at the time of their appearance. Doing so tends to obscure the deeper reasons readers and critics had for condemning works, reasons in many cases going far beyond any kind of personal discomfort (whether or not that was present). In highlighting perspectives such as Brunetière's we come better to understand the complexity of literature's place in the early Third Republic and the thought of its citizens. In particular, we see that contemporary novels were viewed as apparatuses serving a social purpose, even when that purpose was masked in the final analysis. Brunetière's brand of didacticism is, in truth, relatively fluid. There is a repeated emphasis on exposition allowing the reader to grasp the processes being undergone by the novel's characters; the idea of peppering the text with maxims or concluding directly from the narrative's events to a particular finding is absent.[221] But the end goal is always the same; to provide them with exemplars of behaviour to be followed or avoided.

In this process interest in the novel itself appears to suffer. The ways in which this occurs can frequently make Brunetière's arguments appear diminished today. For instance, his objection to Daudet's description of a crucial scene in *Les Rois en Exil* is as follows: "M. Daudet semble avoir pris plaisir à rabaisser cette reine…quand on vient lui apprendre que le roi va signer l'acte fatal de renonciation…à quoi bon ajouter cette phrase : « …elle eut un geste tragique et libre *qui fit glisser sa manche jusqu'au coude* ». » (Brunetière's italics). He makes clear his qualms by asking « vous avez beau mettre « tragique », ce geste m'a montré la femme dans la reine, et, je veux bien qu'elle y soit, mais était-ce le moment de m'en faire souvenir ? ».[222] Even in the 1870s, the appearance of an exposed elbow could hardly give the average reader much of a

[221] Elsewhere, this led Brunetière to praise Balzac like few other authors, while dismissing the question of his narrators' well-known tendency to moralize in the course of a novel: instead, it is Balzac's 'objectivité' that Brunetière makes his defining trait (Brunetière, *Balzac*, p.65). In contrast, the critic exhorts "laissons donc de côté les dissertations dont il a pu remplir son *Curé de Village* ou son *Médecin de Campagne* !" (p.191)

[222] ibid., p.92.

shudder. But for Brunetière, the change in register he perceives this detail as effecting destroys an idealized appreciation of the scene. The pattern is clear; each time the queen traverses a moment of great emotion, the critic demands a depiction thereof kept pure of details that invest the scene with any specificity, particularly of a carnal nature. Nothing must intrude on the exemplarity of the moment.

Brunetière is, then, suspicious of description. In his aesthetics it is a potentially corrosive category, which must be circumscribed and employed only in certain contexts so as to allow the real business of the novel to occur unhindered. A parallel with the Dreyfus Affair quickly emerges. The details of the case, particularly the illegal and often racially-motivated manoeuvrings of the army's General Staff, could only interfere with the gleaming vision of the military enshrined in 'Après le Procès'' second section. The social harmony and sense of purpose Brunetière believed would be fostered by such a presentation of the army superseded the question of Dreyfus' and his superiors' precise actions. It is no surprise that when Brunetière comes to elect passages from *Les Rois en Exil* novel that are the richest examples of Daudet's talent, the first selected should be showcase both nationalism and collective feeling. As the critic puts it, « c'est, dans le chapitre intitulé *Veillée d'Armes*, le bal à l'Hôtel de Rosen, l'entrée de Christian et de Frédérique dans la fête, l'air national d'Illyrie sonnant à leur apparition… »[223] This segment speaks, in particular, of « la voix même de la patrie, gonflée de souvenirs et de larmes de regrets et d'espoirs inexprimés ». Brunetière is most drawn to the passage that expresses a national sentiment,[224] and which effaces the individuals expressing that sentiment: he

[223] ibid., p.94.
[224] perhaps he viewed Daudet's use of fictional 'Illyrie' as a positive, allowing as it did a more abstract presentation of patriotism unfettered by historical baggage.

summarizes the scene through a list of abstract or inanimate nouns, emphasizing music and not words or deeds.

His reading of *Les Rois en Exil* thus manifests a taste for nationalist fervour and collective feeling. The emphasis on memory, and the emotion it generates, in the Daudet passage above are more commonly hallmarks of far-right nationalism that were used to oppose the abstract ideals of the Republic. It is thus curious to find a republican using them for his own ends. However, it must be remembered that a succession of broadly centre-right republican cabinets during the Affair echoed Brunetière's concern for maintaining public order at the expense of an investigation into the Dreyfus case. This prompted Zola's 'Lettre à M. Brisson' in July 1898, when he realized that its addressee's ascent to presidency of the Council was not going to bring any greater political will to addressing the Dreyfus case. In other words, there was no division between republican Dreyfusism and anti-republican anti-Dreyfusism; a majority of every political grouping in the National Assembly was anti-Dreyfusard.[225] However, Brunetière's reasons for tilting this way, as reconstructed here, appear to go beyond the typical republican anti-Dreyfusard posture of status quo. While a desire not to upset it is central to his stance, it is extended by an affirmation of national feeling that contrasts with the negative impulse to avoid disturbance.

He would return to critical reflection on Daudet's oeuvre in 1883, when the author published *L'Evangéliste*. The novel's plot can be summarized as follows; a mother and daughter of Danish extraction, the Ebsens, live in a building in the Quartier Latin (Daudet's favourite haunt for the noble of spirit but poor of wallet – in *Le Nabab*, the honourable and destitute

[225] This was true even of the parliamentary socialists, many of whom were inclined in its early stages to treat the Affair as a bourgeois civil war: only after Henry's suicide at the end of August 1898 did they begin to move in large numbers towards a revisionist stance on the Dreyfus case (Cahm, *L'Affaire Dreyfus,* p.154).

Joyeuse family reside Rue Soufflot, just a few blocks over). The daughter, Eline, is the central character, making Brunetière's observation that "l'unité du sujet…est...dans le personnage non pas de son *Evangéliste*, mais…dans le personnage de son *Evangélisée* » apt.[226] Indeed, Eline becomes progressively more influenced by Jeanne Autheman, a rich Protestant woman who awakens a form of atavistic Lutheranism in Eline. As a result, the young woman turns away not only from her mother but from the kindly M. Lorie-Dufresne, whom she had agreed to marry in large part to help raise his children, their mother having died some years earlier. Protestantism is thus portrayed as present-day cults frequently are; a dehumanizing force which severs the convert's bonds to the wholesome influences in their life, above all family, and makes of them an automaton whose only remaining loyalty is to the religion. Conversion to Protestantism, as Daudet's narrator puts it, serves to « détacher les âmes de leurs affections naturelles…les offrir à Jésus, encore toutes palpitantes et meurtries des liens rompus ! »[227]

This characterization finds favour with Brunetière. For him, the novel's didactic merit outweighs its literary qualities, and he approvingly quotes a source close to Daudet who informed him that "son ambition, dans ce roman, n'avait pas tant été d'écrire une belle oeuvre que de faire une bonne action ».[228] More than this, the a-literary motivation for taking up the pen enhances the writing itself, freeing the author from the pitfalls of overthinking the process, and as such "son style est ici plus net et plus sain ». Such an argument highlights perhaps better than anything else Brunetière's distrust of writing for writing's sake, and his belief that not only should the novel have other goals than stylistic perfection, aiming for the appropriate goals would increase the quality of the text in every respect. In Pagès' terms, « son ideal esthétique est

[226] Brunetière, *Le Roman Naturaliste,* p.350.
[227] Alphonse Daudet, *L'Evangéliste* (Paris: Lemerre, 1888), p.87.
[228] Brunetière, *Le Roman Naturaliste,* p. 346.

celui d'un style qui se définit comme une *exécution*, un simple aboutissement de la pensée, une absence de travail formel. Inversement, l'écriture naturaliste apparaît comme une surcharge, une trop grande attention accordée à la dimension stylistique ».[229]

Brunetière's anti-Protestantism has been previously affirmed by Steven C. Hause in his article 'Anti-Protestant Rhetoric in the Early Third Republic'. But Hause actually reaches the correct conclusion by the wrong means, distorting a later article of Brunetière's entitled 'Voulons-Nous une Eglise Nationale?' which was collected in the posthumous volume *Questions Actuelles* (1907). Hause glosses Brunetière's argument therein as being that "Protestants had been forced to choose between their religion and their home-land, and they had chosen their religion."[230] In fact, Brunetière was referring *not* to the worldview of his Protestant contemporaries, but to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, and lamenting that the laws on secularism being passed in his own time were a repeat of that tragic error from the Ancien Régime. In other words, as with Judaism, Brunetière's public statements on Protestantism are scrupulously neutral and condemnatory of injustice towards those religious minorities: Hause thus does him a serious disservice. It is, in fact, through the literary channel of his praise for *L'Evangéliste* that we can begin to see how close Brunetière truly was to "quelques "nationalistes", en vérité trop échauffés"[231] such as Maurras or Drumont.

In Daudet's novel, Mme Autheman, the perverting influence on Eline's thought, has an unhappily married banker husband, the source of the wealth she uses to fund her religious work:

---

[229] Pagès, *La Bataille Littéraire*, p.32. At the same time, Zola repeatedly trumpeted the streamlined writing of his own novels as well as those of his chosen predecessors such as Flaubert; but interpreting this critical arms-race of simplicity is beyond us here.

[230] Steven R. Hause, "Anti-Protestant Rhetoric in the Early Third Republic," *French Historical Studies*, 16-1 (Spring 1989), p.188.

[231] His own words, 'Voulons-Nous un Eglise Nationale?' in *Questions Actuelles* (Paris: Perrin, 1907), p.246. Once again, his political texts overtly distinguish him from more strident ideologues.

"une fortune colossale, à mettre au service d'oeuvres pieuses."[232] The Autheman family comes from a long line of Jewish bankers and gold dealers, but M. Autheman was unable to find a wife among his coreligionists due to his facial deformity. Jeanne, repulsed by all men either morally or physically, consented to the marriage, which took place "au temple, non à la synagogue, malgré les cris de tout Israel."[233] As soon as Autheman's mother dies, he converts to his wife's religion. Thus Judaism and Protestantism are conjoined by *L'Evangéliste*'s narrative in the most intimate manner possible. The physically deformed Jew and the emotionally warped Protestant form the couple whose combination of means and motivation ultimately generate the conversion of Eline; the young woman had been tempted into Jeanne's orbit through the latter's offer of a paid prayer-book translation. Two of Maurras' 'quatre états confédérés', then, are the targets against whom Daudet's 'bonne oeuvre' was directed.

For Brunetière to consider such a tale "l'un des meilleurs récits que nous devons à l'auteur du *Nabab* »[234] indicates a sympathy with Drumontian execration of the Jewish-Protestant elements in contemporary France. Brunetière's opinion of Drumont himself, and his writings, was extremely low. When *La France Juive* was published in 1886, the critic wrote a scathing review of the text in *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, lambasting Drumont's "sereine audace de fanatisme"[235] Yet the discussion of *L'Evangéliste*'s text above underlines the chain of associations linking Drumont's extremism, through the Daudet novel (whose author was a personal friend of Drumont's[236]), to Brunetière's disdain for the sectarian nature of Protestantism. Could he have changed his mind between 1884, when the *Evangéliste* review was

[232] Daudet, *L'Evangéliste,* p.89.
[233] ibid., p.89. Of course, using 'temple' for the Protestant church may be yet another way of hinting at underlying parallels between Protestantism and Judaism.
[234] Brunetière, *Le Roman Naturaliste,* p.346.
[235] *La Revue des Deux Mondes* (May 31 1886), p.693.
[236] A piquant detail often noted by historians of the Affair is that at Daudet's funeral, less than a month before the publication of 'J'Accuse!...', both Drumont and Zola were pallbearers.

written, and 1901, the time of 'Voulons-Nous une Eglise Nationale?'? It isn't impossible, but neither does anything point to a change of heart – certainly, he does nothing in his later writing to acknowledge any ideological harshness in the 1884 text, and his deliberate inclusion of it in the 1890s editions of *Le Roman Naturaliste* indicates continuity with, not repudiation of, its content.[237] Rather, the more plausible picture is of a critic whose commitment to moderation weakened when literature, not politics, was the subject, and who allowed opinions he would never have affirmed in an article on current affairs to slip into his reviews of fiction.

Both chronologically and ideologically, the beliefs underlying Brunetière's views on naturalism are bridged by his opinions in the late 1880s and early 1890s on the role of science in society. They mark a turn in his polemical activity from the primarily literary to the political, with religion and nationalism becoming more frequent topics than book reviews. Perhaps the key transitional text in this shift is Brunetière's review of his friend Paul Bourget's novel *Le Disciple*, in 1889. The date was significant, coinciding with the centenary of the Bastille raid, as well as the Paris Exposition, which not only marked that centenary but saw the inauguration of the Eiffel Tower and a display of many other scientific and technical advances. Politically, France had just been gripped by the Boulanger Affair, in which the general of that name posed the first significant threat to the democratic republicans since they had gained control of government in 1877.[238] That threat quickly passed in early 1889 when he declined to respond to the urgings of his disparate enthusiasts that he seize power, and subsequently fled to Belgium as the government's machinery of retaliation closed around him.

[237] Other essays featuring in the first, 1884, edition of the volume were removed in the 1892 and 1896 editions.
[238] By a neat coincidence, Boulanger fled France on the same day that the Eiffel Tower was inaugurated (March the 31st, 1889) [Frederick Brown, *For the Soul of France*, (New York: Knopf, 2010), p.124]

Bourget's novel tells the story of Adrien Sixte, a materialist philosopher whose influence over his student, Robert Greslou, has tragic results for the latter's paramour, Charlotte de Jussat. The narrative provides a model for Barrès' *Les Déracinés* of 1897, in which the philosopher Bouteiller adversely affects the lives of six young Lorrainers uprooted to Paris. Bourget, Brunetière and Barrès, as noted, would all feature in anti-Dreyfusard circles despite important political differences. As an attack on scientism, however, *Le Disciple* was one of the first major works to assert clearly that science could only provide answers in the observable world, and that any attempt to describe what Bourget called 'l'Inconnaissable' fell outside its purview. Brunetière's review of the novel[239] was highly favourable, and sounds echoes with what he had said about *l'Evangéliste* six years earlier, particularly in statements such as « *Le Disciple* n'est pas seulement l'un des meilleurs romans de M. Paul Bourget: c'est aussi l'une de ses bonnes et de ses meilleures actions ».[240] His comments on Bourget's text are thus a waypoint between his judgment of Daudet's work and what he would later have to say about the intellectuals. Indeed, his opening remarks on *Le Disciple* are perhaps the clearest statement (albeit via rhetorical questions) Brunetière ever made of his views on the link between thought, writing and morality:

> Les idées agissent-elles, ou n'agissent-elles pas, sur les mœurs? Un poète, un auteur dramatique, un romancier surtout (qu'on lit et qu'on relit), un philosophe, un savant même, ne doivent-ils pas se regarder comme ayant un peu charge d'âmes ? Les « vérités » qu'ils proclament, - qui ne sont trop souvent que les erreurs de la veille ou les préjugés du lendemain, - peuvent-ils les mettre à si haut prix que de n'avoir égard, en les

[239] In the July 1st, 1889 edition of *La Revue des Deux Mondes*
[240] *La Revue des Deux Mondes* (July 1 1889), p.215; Brunetière often chided authors for their lapses in style, but as this sentence shows he was prone to the odd pleonasm himself.

> répandant, ni au scandale qu'elles soulèveront, ni à ce qu'elles ébranlent d'autres « vérités » peut-être, ni aux conséquences qui en sortiront ?[241]

These words could be transferred wholesale to a denunciation of Zola or Durkheim ten years later, with no loss in meaning. They also show, through the association of authors to scientists, that Brunetière's 1890s campaign against science and his 1880s attacks on Zolian naturalism were as contiguous intellectually as they were in time. For all his commitment to the Republic, Brunetière was primarily concerned with the nation's cohesion, and the importance of ideas in either reinforcing or undermining this appears in all its clarity in his words above. While other opponents of science, notably Bourget, were monarchists (*Le Disciple* itself contains elogious depictions of the aristocracy in the person of count André de Jussat-Randon) who were additionally motivated to decry the encroachment of science on other facets of life via its association with republican politics, Brunetière is happy to cite Voltaire in his review of his friend's novel, in support of the idea that what's human is what distinguishes men from nature, and that the assimilation of the two has been "la grande erreur du siècle".

At issue is thought in general at this point, not science specifically; but this would change by 1895, when Brunetière published an inflammatory article called 'Après une Visite au Vatican' (for whatever reason, 'après' seemed to be the beginning of choice for his most famous polemical texts). In the words of historian Harry Paul, Brunetière "set the intellectual world of Paris agog"[242] with the piece, provoking immediate response on both sides of the secular/Catholic conflict that was deepening within France. Charles Richet (a future Nobel Prize winner in 1913), in the *Revue Scientifique*, and Marcellin Berthelot, in the *Revue de Paris*, shot

[241] ibid., p.214.
[242] Paul, 'The Debate over the Bankruptcy of Science in 1895', p.303.

back immediately in different styles.[243] The ways in which 'Après une Visite au Vatican' anticipates the reasoning of 'Après le Procès' are clear; most notably, the charges laid at scientific anti-Semitism's door in the latter text are simply a more specific version of the broadside aimed at scientism in the former. By examining external phenomena and claiming to describe man from there, modern science was leaving unfilled a void in men's souls and, like Bourget had argued through the plot of *Le Disciple*, had failed to penetrate a crucial domain of the human experience.

Yet it is equally clear, when the argument is glossed this way, that it harks just as strongly back to Brunetière's attacks on *La Terre*; when he accused Zola and Flaubert of not having "pénétré plus avant que l'écorce des choses", he was rehearsing a claim that would be levelled more intensely at positivism eight years later. It is no surprise, then, that the language employed in 1887 and 1895 is strikingly similar. Brunetière's review of *La Terre* bears the name 'La Banqueroute du Naturalisme'; the phrase that stuck from 'Après une Visite au Vatican' was "la faillite de la science".[244] The economic metaphors also indicate that, for all the epistemological posturing on display in these controversies, what ultimately mattered was intellectual capital, the ability of an idea or movement to attract adherents and maintain its 'crédit' (another term he employed), not its ultimate rational basis. The same phenomenon would be observable during the brief rise and swift fall of Saint-Georges de Bouhélier's 'naturiste' movement in the years that immediately followed; naturism ceased to be a factor when de Bouhélier tried and failed to write quality poetry that would illustrate it, not because the authors of Paris awoke one morning and reasoned that its tenets were misguided.

[243] See Paul, *art. cit.*, for an authoritative discussion of their arguments. Both these perspectives, like Brunetière's, turned on the relationship between material progress and moral insight.

[244] Anne Rasmussen, in 'Critique du progrès, « crise de la science » : débats et représentations du tournant du siècle' (Mil neuf cent, N°14, 1996. pp. 89-113), argues that « ce texte eut une postérité inattendue à cause de la fortune que connut la formule qu'il lançait ».

What, then, did Brunetière make of Zola's *Paris*, a novel that sits at the confluence of so many of the themes discussed above? Its publication in volume, as noted, fell immediately after Zola's libel trial, as Fasquelle, the publisher, first sought to sidestep the firestorm provoked by 'J'Accuse...!', then realized this would be impossible in the foreseeable future. Written before Zola had become involved in the Affair, it was nevertheless perhaps the most political piece of fiction he had ever produced, taking on the anarchist movement and its bomb attacks (which had gripped and terrified Paris earlier in the decade), as well as continuing the examination of religion's role in modern society begun by its predecessors *Lourdes* and *Rome*. Both chronologically and thematically, then, it was primed to induce Brunetière to turn his attention on a Zola novel again after a lull of over a decade, having not commented on anything Zola wrote after *La Terre*, a gap of 7 publications. In between times, Brunetière had won election to the Académie Française at Zola's expense, beating him in an 1893 vote, and had then used his membership to inveigh against Zola's continued attempts to win a seat (he never would).[245]

Brunetière's review appeared in *La Revue des Deux Mondes* one month after his 'Après le Procès'.[246] After the obliqueness of that article, 'Le *Paris* de M. Zola' followed in the same vein by proving to be probably Brunetière's most indulgent judgment of a Zola novel. For all that, it nevertheless consists of almost non-stop criticism, and the manner in which this is structured is revealing. The first and longest section is devoted to a rebuttal of what Brunetière takes to be the philosophy behind the text, and he only moves on to its properly literary traits in the final few pages.

[245] On Zola's closest candidacy, in early 1896 "lors de la séance, Brunetière n'a pas caché son hostilité à Zola". Mitterand, *Zola* v.3, p.212.
[246] The review was published in fortnightly issues running several hundred pages each.

Compagnon has observed that "Brunetière transpose désormais dans la philosophie politique et la sociologie le différend qui l'oppose depuis toujours à Zola, mais qu'il situait sur le plan de l'art et de la morale à l'époque du *Roman naturaliste*".[247] I follow him in this assessment, but have endeavoured in this chapter to show exactly which elements of *Le Roman Naturaliste* were thus transposed, where the author of *Connaissez-Vous Brunetière?* raises the point in passing. As a result, I would argue the Americanism that Compagnon highlights in Brunetière's thought, and particularly its role in clarifying an alternative form of democracy to the hierarchical and title-centric French Republic, is not the product of a revelation experienced by the critic during his time overseas, but the culmination of the aesthetic struggle between the individual and the collective that is evident from *Le Roman Naturaliste* on. In other words, I am less ready than is Compagnon to assert that the American trip was essential to Brunetière's anti-Dreyfusism; close readings of *Le Roman Naturaliste*, and the staging-post of the bankruptcy of science controversy, strongly suggest that he was intellectually primed for such an engagement anyway. In fact, the depth of the reflections to which Brunetière's North American tour gave rise might be attributed to precisely this priming; it offered field experience of questions that he had long been pondering in the abstract when discussing literature.

In the *Paris* review, some of the circumspection or circumlocution of 'Après le Procès' persists, but the distribution of the analysis indicates that Brunetière had further-reaching goals than simply running down Zola's new publication. More specifically, he picks out the same facet of *Paris* that, I have argued, binds it tightly to Zola's writings on the Dreyfus Affair: both novel and polemics contain frequent appeals to 'justice'. In Zola's novel, 'justice' is opposed to 'charité' by the author, as discussed in Chapter 1: for Brunetière, a recent convert to Catholicism,

[247] Compagnon, *Connaissez-Vous Brunetière?*, p.166.

this was a red rag. Much of his review is a response to the clash Zola sets up between the two concepts, 'justice' intended to represent a natural consequence of the scientific mindset applied to society, 'charité' a siren-call from the old world of Catholicism.

Discussing these matters allows Brunetière to activate two controversies at once: the Dreyfus Affair, on the one hand, but also the aforementioned 'bankruptcy of science' debate. He zeroes in on the transparent cipher that is the novel's chemist, Bertheroy,[248] and identifies his maxims as proxies for Zola's own thought: « à cette confiance illimitée dans le pouvoir de la science, si nous ajoutons ce qu'il appelle « la banqueroute de la charité », et sa haine irréconciliable pour une « bourgeoisie défaillante et corrompue », nous aurons, je crois, toute la politique, toute la sociologie, et toute la philosophie de M. Zola ».[249] Zola was clearly avenging himself of Brunetière's swipes at naturalism and science over the previous 11 years by substituting "charité" for those terms in his own declaration of bankruptcy. In other words, just as Brunetière had taken Zola's own concept of naturalism and attempted to turn it against him by promoting Daudet, Zola retorted in *Paris* by replacing the bankruptcy of science with that of charity: his implicit target both saw the bait and took it.

But rather than merely scorning this pushback of his opponent's, Brunetière extends the thrust by sustaining the attack on 'justice': in doing so, he is of course taking issue with one of Zola's watchwords in *La Vérité en Marche*. An anti-Dreyfusard's review of a Zola novel written weeks after the end of Zola's trial was bound to be more a commentary on the author's campaign for Dreyfus than on his fiction, and choosing to concentrate on the appearance of "justice" in the text is Brunetière's way of combining the two: "Car enfin, en quoi consiste-t-elle, cette

[248] evoking Berthelot
[249] *La Revue des Deux Mondes* (Apr. 15 1898), p.925.

"justice"?" He also speaks of a "religion de la science", asserting that "le *Paris* de M. Zola en est la prevue et l'aveu".[250] This equates to a claim that the supposed rationalism of Zola (and his colleagues in scientism and Dreyfusism) is actually a new brand of magical thinking, which reiterates the old structures of faith without acknowledging its debt to them. The irony is that, although unjustified at the time Brunetière wrote them, these critiques would become more apt as the Affair wore on and Zola's rhetoric shifted towards the irrational. Not only this, but Richet, Brunetière's opponent in the bankruptcy of science controversy, may have gone down in history as the 1913 Nobel prize-winner for chemistry, but he was also the father of the word 'ectoplasm'.

When Brunetière does examine the novel's stylistics, he retains the ideological backdrop by focusing on those mixed metaphors that happen to include justice, reserving most of his irritation for the following sentence: « La justice est le soleil, un soleil de beauté, d'harmonie et de force, parce que le soleil est l'unique justice, brulant au ciel pour tout le monde, donnant du même geste, au pauvre comme au riche, sa magnificence, sa lumière et sa chaleur qui sont la source de toute vie ». The aesthetic critique serves a political end: undermine Zola's metaphors enrolling justice in *Paris*, and the strength of his social consciousness-raising, as well as his pleas on behalf of Dreyfus, will suffer along with them.

Numerous references have been made to Brunetière's commentary on the Dreyfus Affair above, but I will conclude with a more thorough discussion of 'Après le Procès' and its relationship to Brunetière's earlier writings. The article is pointedly elliptical in its treatment of the Affair. For one thing, it never mentions Dreyfus, and even Zola does not appear by name. Instead, the novelist is mentioned periphrastically in the exordium: "Ai-je besoin de rappeler les faits, et la mémoire n'en est-elle pas encore trop présente? Il s'agissait de savoir si le premier

[250] ibid., p.930.

venu, sans preuves ni commencemens [sic] de preuves, a le droit d'insulter grossièrement la justice, et en même temps l'armée..."[251] Zola is 'le premier venu', and the evidence challenging Dreyfus' culpability dismissed. Brunetière also emphasises weariness at the ubiquity of the Affair by starting with the above question.

The evident illegitimacy of Zola's campaign raises a deeper question, since "sur cette question si simple...l'opinion a semblé se partager en deux. Pourquoi cela? Comment cela? C'est ce que je voudrais examiner". 'Après le Procès' will provide three answers to the puzzle, which concern: 'l'antisémitisme', 'l'armée et la démocratie', and 'quelques intellectuels'. The third of these sections has received the most attention from scholars, because of its 20th-century implications, and the first has also been examined for similar reasons. Yet Brunetière seems to have been most interested in the middle question, that of the army, if one is to judge by the pages it occupies.

In truth, even though these three discussions are presented as answers to the agitation caused by the Affair, the first two do little to address or explain that issue. Instead, throughout this best-known of anti-Dreyfusard writings, the author diverts the argument towards other targets. First among these is a continuation of the attack on science already evidenced in 1895. Brunetière's paradoxical argument about anti-Semitism is that it is partisans of science that have done most to perpetuate it, by enabling the divisive reasoning of scientific racism. "Ce sont des savants...qui ont posé la distinction des différentes races d'hommes en 'inférieures', et en

[251] Ferdinand Brunetière, 'Après le Procès'. *La Revue des Deux Mondes* (Mar. 15, 1898), p.428.

'supérieures'."[252] Linguists have done the same in their own sphere, which, for Brunetière, is "du Renan tout pur".[253]

The critic thus continues to attack the now-dead Renan, as he had done for some time, but what is equally striking is the similarity between this critique of scientific racism and that used on Zola's novels. Much as ethnographers have divided the world's races, Zola had divided French society into constituent classes and groups, with equally dismal intellectual consequences. Even as Brunetière widens his thought perhaps further than it had ever previously gone, he remains committed to the ideas previously used to aesthetic ends.

In turning to the army and its role in society, Brunetière is more explicit in critiquing individualism, drawing (as was not always the case at the time) a sharp distinction between socialism and anarchism. The latter is denounced as a particularly violent form of individualism, whereas the former finds some sympathy from the critic, as he defines it as "la croissante extension de ce sentiment de 'solidarité' qui engage l'homme à l'homme et qui fait de nous tous les membres d'un même corps".[254] One need only think back to the scenes praised in Daudet's *Les Rois en Exil* to measure how elogious such a statement is. In truth, much of the discussion of the army is in fact a reflection on the compatibility between socialism and the military, and indeed with more established social institutions in general. Compagnon has observed that this reasoning in fact brings Brunetière intellectually somewhat closer to Zola: "le désaccord politique entre les deux hommes n'était pas absolu, car la 'question sociale' les préoccupait

[252] ibid., p.429.
[253] Compagnon highlights other targets of Brunetière's, both implicit and explicit, in 'Après le Procès', including Herbert Spencer and the palaeographer Paul Meyer (*Connaissez-Vous Brunetière?*, pp.147, 150). He also underlines the "second antisémitisme, larvé, bienséant, d'autant plus redoutable" (p.137) to which Brunetière falls prey in this section of the article, by further asserting that "quelques juifs ne sont pas tout à fait innocens de l'antisémitisme" (Brunetière, p.433).
This slip further supports the notion that Brunetière's 1884 praise for Daudet's *L'Evangéliste* was fuelled partly by discomfort with the perceived disproportion of Jewish and Protestant influence in the Third Republic.
[254] Brunetière, 'Après le Procès', p.434.

également".[255] In fact it is excessive commercialism which emerges as Brunetière's target here, and Zola's warnings against the same thing in *Au Bonheur des Dames* provide a point of contact.

Brunetière concludes the discussion of the army's role by asserting that "ce n'est pas la démocratie qui est l'ennemi, c'est l'individualisme et c'est l'anarchie'.[256] This allows him to turn to the intellectuals, whose principal danger lies in their ability to exploit public opinion, and in so doing, impose their potential false reasoning on the rest of the country: "ils ne réussissent qu'à déconcerter, à dérouter, à troubler profondément l'opinion. Parce qu'ils savent des choses que nous ne savons pas, nous leur faisons crédit de celles qu'ils ignorent".[257] Brunetière's taste for tripartite analysis also sometimes extended to his sentence structures. Thus is established the critique of Zola, Duclaux and their allies, founded on their misplaced self-assurance.

In other words, each section of 'Après le Procès' develops, in its own way, the inchoate principles of Brunetière's campaign against naturalism. The paradoxical attempt to prove that Zola was not a true naturalist here becomes the claim that the party of science is the true source of modern anti-Semitism. The praise for the army as a source of national unity echoes some of the praise bestowed on Daudet. And the excesses of the intellectuals recall the charges of ignorance levelled at Zola over his research for the *Rougon-Macquart*s.

Twenty years of Brunetière's criticism thus point to the following; firstly, a worldview governed by the distinction between appearance and substance, and secondly, an undying taste for polemics. The two combine to explain the consistency of his positions, even as times and

[255] Compagnon, *Connaissez-Vous Brunetière?*, p.143.
[256] Brunetière, 'Après le Procès', p.442.
[257] ibid., p.443.

topics changed. His longstanding aesthetics are not only a guide to his political development, but they also sometimes reveal more extreme convictions than he was willingly to assert directly, notably in the praise given to Daudet's attack on Protestantism. Most importantly, Brunetière's commitment to the classical ideals of the 17th century repeatedly evinces itself, with a reluctance to invoke its terms (notably 'bienséance' and 'vraisemblance') that appears to stem from an adaptive view of literary history, in which concepts must find expressions that signify in their immediate context. Since 'classicisme' was, by consensus, dead as of 1830 in France,[258] Brunetière's aesthetics led him to attempt to reinvest the dominant 'naturalisme' with the characteristics once displayed by, for instance, Racine's tragedies.

In this transition from aesthetics to politics, the controversy over the 'bankruptcy of science' was an essential staging-post. Brunetière's reactionary discourse was honed in this clash with some of the leading figures of the Republic's scientific institutions, transferring his disappointment with what he saw as the vulgar descriptive practices of literary naturalism into a wider jeremiad against the superficial results of the modern intellectual project. Brunetière's well-known hostility to individualism also has a touchstone in the classical aesthetic, whose harmony and concern with decorum are at odds with the critic's view of the consequences inherent in France's 1898 internal divisions.

[258] The famous 'bataille d'*Hernani*', in which the supporters of Victor Hugo's play fought off the verbal attacks of the establishment at its premiere, is commonly taken to symbolize the victory of Romanticism over classicism in France.

Dissident Naturalism: Henry Céard Reads the Dreyfus Affair

Henry Céard (1851-1924) only published two novels despite a writing career that lasted over 50 years, and occupies a place in the footnotes of the history of the naturalist school, unknown to many outside that specialization; those who have heard his name may know him only as one the contributors to *Les Soirées de Médan* in 1880, a collection of short stories that falsely heralded the arrival of a lasting naturalist movement. His biography remains obscure on many points; for instance, he married late in life but almost nothing is known about his wife. Yet here, he will receive equal footing with the more esteemed Zola and Brunetière. Before discussing Céard's role in the Affair, explaining his prominence in this study is vital.

When Zola, in his hunger for documentation with which to furnish the dossiers of the *Rougon-Macquart* novels, was unsure where to look, he often turned to Céard. A former medical student, Céard's wide range of knowledge and acquaintances made him a collaborator not just on his favoured medicine but on topics as obscure as the *épis* with which Lazare Chanteau unsuccessfully tries to break the ocean waves in Zola's *La Joie de Vivre*.[259]

Céard was close to his fellow 'médaniste' J.-K. Huysmans. In the late 1870s this closeness revolved around a shared enthusiasm for Zola's writing, and through their friendship they quickly became part of the older man's small circle of literary friends in the period of *L'Assommoir*'s publication. Following the furore caused by that novel, Léon Hennique gave a lecture at the Salle des Capucines defending it, and Huysmans wrote a series of articles defending the author himself; Céard wrote an impassioned defence of the text in *L'Artiste*.[260] Years later, he accompanied the older man on a triumphal 1893 visit to London following the completion of the

[259] H. Mitterand, *Zola* v.II, p.672.
[260] C.A. Burns, *Henry Céard et le Naturalisme* (Birmingham: Goodman and Sons, 1982), p.53.

Rougon-Macquart.[261] More sombrely, but in the same period, Céard served as a go-between when Zola's marriage to Alexandrine threatened to collapse under the revelations of Emile's second household with Jeanne Rozerot and the existence of their two small children. Professionally and personally, the two men's relationship was close and, without it, Zola's writing and his life would most likely have been rather different.

Yet, after Zola died in 1902, Céard wrote this in a letter to Huysmans: "La pierre de son tombeau est-elle assez lourde...j'ai bien peur que rien n'en sorte plus et que même sa mémoire ait péri tout entière. Je m'effraie quand je constate mon impuissance actuelle à relire ses livres".[262] That change in attitude, less than a decade after he had been one of the author's inner circle, is at the heart of this chapter. The reasons for Céard's break with Zola, and more importantly the consequences of that break, provide a new perspective on the Dreyfus Affair and afford us a case study of a journalist who, unlike the subjects of the preceding chapters, was unable to command the public's attention merely by signing his name.

These two defining features of Céard's engagement in the Affair, resentful insider knowledge of Zola combined with a position of enunciation that required more calculation than his famous peers, make his story both unique and revealing. René-Pierre Colin has commented that Céard was "aveuglé par un nationalisme qui va s'exacerbant et qui va l'entrainer à un antidreyfusisme virulent. Rien de plus sinistre, d'ailleurs, que la hargne qu'il déploie à l'encontre de son ancien ami".[263] Sinister is one description of Céard's writings on the Affair, but the subtlety and breadth of his literary allusions, and his role in transmitting the ideas of the Ligue de la Patrie Française, provide the substance that Colin disregards.

---

[261] Mitterand, *Zola* v.III p.42 (f/n).
[262] Burns, *Henry Céard et le Naturalisme*, p.255 (f/n).
[263] René-Pierre Colin, *Zola, Renégats et Alliés: La République Naturaliste* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1988), p.305.

Céard was as prolific a journalist as he was infrequent a novelist: between 1896 and 1898 alone he produced 350 articles, primarily for two newspapers, *Le National* and *L'Evénement*: and this excludes his theatre criticism.[264] At the time there were dozens of dailies printed in Paris, ranging all across the political spectrum, and Céard's two homes were on the centre-right. Yet, as will be discussed, his most significant contribution to discourse on the Dreyfus Affair came in the equally conservative but far more influential *Le Gaulois*, run by Arthur Meyer. Over the course of Céard's career he ranged across a variety of subjects in his columns, producing an often insightful series of 'Portraits Littéraires' on such figures as Zola, Goncourt, Daudet, but also Musset, Bossuet, Tolstoy and Schopenhauer. This series would become significant even as his attention turned to the greatest political crisis of the age.

This chapter will consist primarily of close readings of Céard's numerous articles about the Dreyfus Affair, connecting them both to the wider features of the polemic and to his knowledge and involvement in the contemporary literary field. Unlike the other authors studied here, Céard was not a doctrinaire: where Zola fought to define naturalism and establish its lasting authority, Brunetière revived classicism in a new context and Saint-Georges de Bouhélier attempted to found a school of anti-symbolist poetry, Céard remained an individual critic turning his sceptical eye on his literary contemporaries and on the Affair itself.

As a result, aesthetics and politics find themselves in a rather different relationship in his writing; without a systematic body of literary thought on which to draw, aesthetics become less a body of source material for political discourse than a mode of thought. In practical terms, this means that Céard will deploy a range of techniques of *literary* analysis to understand a *historical*

[264] Burns, *Henry Céard et le Naturalisme*, p.255 (f/n). In all, Céard wrote over 1100 opinion and critical articles over the course of his career (Burns, p.182)

crisis. We will see that these techniques include psychological analysis, exemplars taken from literary history, close reading, the book review, and epistolary discourse, along with tropes such as irony, catachresis, and prosopopoeia. Céard's prolific writing, and the fact that he was invited to give his perspective on the Affair to a wider-than-usual audience, indicate that these literary techniques were not a private game. Rather, in a culture that was suffused with literature, his aestheticized perspective on the crisis held significant appeal for readers who struggled to understand the relationship between the extraordinary passions and twists of the Affair and the usually mundane political process of the Third Republic. For Céard, and for many of his compatriots, the Dreyfus Affair was a text of frequently hermetic qualities, whose interpretation could be achieved in much the same manner as that of fictional prose.

Beyond these literary concerns, however, will appear an increasingly direct commentary on the political features of the Affair, and an increasingly personal engagement in a particular, conservative, political tendency. Céard's micro-historical value is thus twofold: on the one hand, he reminds us that the crisis was a cultural phenomenon more than it was a political one, while on the other, he illustrates that the Affair provoked profound and lasting realignments of France's political landscape, through the formation both of new political organizations and of less institutional intellectual tendencies.

Zola's Shadow

Céard's articles on the Dreyfus Affair are numerous and focus on Zola's involvement in events and his motivations for action. The chief constant is Céard's bringing his considerable literary culture to bear on the analysis of events at every turn, even when the subject is not obviously discussable in literary terms. His opening commentary is, however, one which Céard's knowledge of literary history allows him easily to construct. Published in the *National* of the 16th

of December 1897, it features a return to two instances of a man of letters involving himself in a judicial controversy.

By writing a piece on Zola's involvement almost a month before 'J'Accuse...!' would appear, Céard demonstrates his determination to become involved even before the full measure of the crisis had become apparent. As a middling critic at a pair of middling newspapers, Céard doubtless relished the chance to display his expertise on a subject - the workings of Zola's mind and prose - on which few were more knowledgeable. Yet, over time, Céard's actions and opinions would show that the Affair itself was bringing out many of his personal beliefs through the prism of a critique of Zola.

Céard compares Zola's involvement on behalf of Dreyfus to those of Victor Hugo and Balzac, when they pleaded in favour of the accused men Gueux and Peytel respectively. He thus undermines the obvious comparison with Voltaire's defence of Calas, by far the best-remembered example of a litterateur defending an accused man in France.[265] Both Gueux and Peytel, unlike Calas, turned out to have been rightly accused of their crimes. Céard stresses Gueux's, a petty thief, pederasty in prison, for which he was punished and subsequently killed the prison director in revenge. One can read this as an implication that Dreyfus' Jewishness was, in a similar way to Gueux's homosexuality, the deviant cause for his ills, and that Zola is overlooking this in assuming his man's innocence. This can only be speculation, however: there is no direct evidence of Céard holding anti-Semitic views, although numerous hints at his true attitude will be evident in the later articles. Rather his anti-Dreyfusism, as was the case for many moderate anti-Dreyfusards, was born of a conviction in the overwhelming military threat posed by imperial Germany to the wellbeing of France. However, it is highly suggestive that Céard

[265] A few weeks later, *Le Siècle* would publish Armand Fouquier's narrative "L'Affaire Calas". (Alain Pagès, *Emile Zola, un Intellectuel dans l'Affaire Dreyfus*, p.126)

should choose, in recounting his analogy from past events, to linger on the fundamental deviancy (as he saw it) of the man Hugo championed. Hugo's short novel, *Claude Gueux*, inspired by the real character, fictionalized the case and passed over its unflattering details, making it a useful point of comparison for Céard.

As for Balzac and Peytel, the case is clearly presented as a sharp contrast with Dreyfus'. Peytel was sentenced to death for the murder of his wife and a manservant, whose real cause (one Peytel refused to reveal in his defence) was his catching the pair in flagrante. Since Peytel and his wife had left each other their estates 'au dernier survivant', without this detail it was assumed that Peytel had acted out of avarice and he was guillotined. Thus, for Céard, it is capital in these historical examples that a crucial detail was omitted from both defences. Peytel would have been saved had he confessed the shame of his cuckolding.[266] But, Céard asserts, « la vérité que Balzac avait soupçonnée et qu'il n'a pas formulée alors qu'elle pouvait sauver Peytel, nous l'attendons encore dans le procès Dreyfus, et M. Zola ne la dévoile pas plus que quiconque ». Hence the title of Céard's article, 'Virtuosité Littéraire'. He suggests that without this revelation of truth in favour of the man they defend, history shows that "les écrivains tirent bien peu de notoriété éternelle des contestations juridiques où ils se mêlent par esprit de simple virtuosité littéraire". Indeed, literary and legal scholar Pierre-Antoine Perrod has noted that Balzac's open letter of support for Peytel had done neither man many favours: "l'opinion publique a mal réagi à la lettre de Balzac." The newspaper *Le Capitole* carried a satiric poem containing the lines "Tu vas périr dans l'ombre, ô gloire sans rivale / Le succès dure peu, quand il vient du scandale.."[267]

[266] Céard's certainty as to the true nature of the case is misleading, as even today the details leave scholars uncertain. See Pierre-Antoine Perrod : 'Nouveaux documents sur l'affaire Peytel : la genèse d'une erreur judiciaire'. *L'Année Balzacienne*, 1982 n° 3, pp. 7-30.
[267] Perrod, art. cit., p.18

Céard is thus making two principal moves as he begins to oppose Zola's intervention in the Affair. The first is, implicitly, to reject the idea that Esterhazy's culpability is this revelation that could turn the Dreyfus Affair, as Peytel's shame could have in his case. By the time Céard wrote the article, Mathieu Dreyfus had publicly accused Esterhazy of being the true author of the *bordereau* used to incriminate Alfred at his 1894 trial, and copies of the major's handwriting had been published in the press, allowing comparison with the *bordereau*. Events were moving rapidly towards Esterhazy's own military tribunal, which would take place a few weeks after 'Virtuosité Littéraire' saw publication: Esterhazy's acquittal, a crushing blow to the Dreyfusards, would trigger Zola's composition of 'J'Accuse...!'. Yet Céard, like many in France at the time, saw no reason to doubt the military judges. Scepticism had been stirred by Auguste Scheurer-Kestner's coyness in asserting wrongdoing in Dreyfus' trial without providing clear evidence; when he eventually addressed the Senate regarding the Affair, the lack of revelations in his speech did the cause no good.

Nevertheless, to write an article about the Dreyfus Affair in December 1897 without mentioning or even considering Esterhazy's role in events was to fail to address the Affair in a meaningful way. It brings to mind the then-prime minister Jules Méline's claim in the Chamber des Deputies that "il n'y a pas d'Affaire Dreyfus", uttered less than a fortnight earlier.[268] No matter that Céard begins with the assertion "Je voudrais défendre M. Emile Zola, et…je voudrais expliquer à ses adversaires mêmes, pour quelles raisons qui semblent indéchiffrables, il s'est mêlé, à propos de l'Affaire Dreyfus, de questions qui, d'apparence, devaient le laisser dans une souveraine indifférence". By invoking the possibility of a revelation in the case without taking the trouble to dismiss Esterhazy's alleged role, Céard was skirting around the most important issue of the moment.

[268] Cahm, *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, p.83.

This first entry into the discourse surrounding the Affair is thus only a glimpse of Céard's views. As much as he asserts the indecipherability of Zola's own entry into the fray, he does not justify his own decision to emphasize some elements at the expense of others. However, we can resume the constants to be found in Céard's later tracts that 'Virtuosité Littéraire' already manifests. Foremost is a central concern for Zola's psychology in order to explain his motivations for engagement to Céard's readers. Here, the older man's penchant for the 'Virtuosité Littéraire' of the article's title is presented as the principal, and indeed only, concern driving Zola's campaign.

Céard's next commentary on the Affair came in *L'Evénement*, the principal destination for his articles in this period.[269] On the 15th of January 1898, two days after the publication of *J'Accuse*, Céard addressed Esterhazy and the Dreyfus Affair as a whole for the first time in 'La Ville d'Alceste'. This continued a pattern in which Céard's commentary on the Affair mirrored Zola's involvement in it; whenever the older man did (as in the case of his trial a few weeks later) or wrote (as with 'Le Cinquième Acte' in September 1899) something of significance to the crisis, Céard was almost certain to respond. The one exception, an article called 'La Patrie Française' marking the founding of that organization, will be discussed below.

Despite the reactive nature of Céard's writings, 'La Ville d'Alceste' marks a departure in their content. No longer was he attempting to restrict himself to a discussion of Zola, his role and psychology; however, as in the 'Virtuosité Littéraire' article, literature and its history provided the principal motif by which Céard structured his comments.

The reference to Molière's *Le Misanthrope* is quickly elucidated by the article's opening lines; Céard chooses to treat playfully the Affair which was reaching its paroxysm of emotion and vituperation on both sides, causing riots and destroying friendships. He presents the piece as

[269] See Burns' bibliography of Céard's journalism, *Henry Céard et le Naturalisme*, pp. 402-15.

an open letter to *L'Evénement*'s editor from a group of concerned readers, whose principal concern is peace and quiet: "Nous sommes quelques lecteurs de votre journal, esprits sans passion…spectateurs du théâtre de la vie, nous nous étions paisiblement installés dans notre fauteuil pour voir s'en dérouler les incohérences…Mais voici qu'on nous gêne, ce qui nous paraît un excès ». The social world of Paris has become as unbearable to *L'Evénement*'s readers as it was to Alceste in the 17th century. The second paragraph specifies « vous entendez bien qu'il s'agit ici de l'affaire Dreyfus ». Céard is careful to avoid committing to a firm position on the ex-captian's culpability, but he nevertheless makes his anti-Dreyfusism clear through his imagined proxies: "nous ne savons pas si ledit Dreyfus est une victime autant que ses partisans le veulent faire croire, mais les moyens qu'ils emploient nous inciteraient plutôt à concevoir une conviction opposée à leurs sentiments ». As in the article of a month before, Dreyfusism (in this case that of all Dreyfus' supporters, not just Zola) is portrayed as emerging from the affective realm rather than that of reason through a verb of will ('ses partisans le veulent') and a noun of feeling ('leurs sentiments').

With extreme detachment, although the extent of Dreyfus' physical suffering on Devil's Island would only become clear to the French public 18 months later, on his return to France for retrial, Céard paints his readers as the true victims of the Affair, as they have been and will continue to be "obligés de subir les mêmes conversations, d'écouter les memes hypothèses..". Neither side, he claims, has the proof that will end the deluge of argument and opinion that swamps the ordinary citizen. In that absence, *res judicata*, in the form of the decisions handed down by Dreyfus and Esterhazy's military tribunals, is the surest guide: "nous nous en tenons aux jugements de deux conseils de guerre et nous nous croyons rassurés en remarquant que d'une manière directe et d'une manière indirecte, dans son procès propre et dans le procès

Esterhazy, Dreyfus a été condamné deux fois ». The 'readers' go on to protest that this faith in the verdicts leads them to be scorned as "des individus de mince valeur intellectuelle" by their Dreyfusard peers.

'La Ville d'Alceste' is thus a very different piece from 'Virtuosité Littéraire', at once in its framing, its coverage of the Affair and the themes it enrols. Despite the prankish tone set by the substitution of a fictitious party of readers for the journalist's own perspective, Céard addresses several of the dominant principles that structured discourse surrounding the Affair at the time. The growing conflict between the intellectuals, becoming a recognizable group for the first time at that very moment through the petition published on the 14th (one day before 'La Ville d'Alceste) in *L'Aurore*, and their opponents is evoked by the reference to Dreyfusard scorn of their adversaries' capacities. Faith in the authority of court is also central to Céard's rejection of the volume of pamphlets and discussions generated in response to the Affair. And, in prolonging his discussion of this journalistic excess, Céard alludes to another staple of anti-Dreyfusard thought; the perniciousness of Jewish money and its alleged power to alter public opinion.

"Nous voulons croire encore que, malgré les paroles de M. Mathieu Dreyfus, l'argent demeure étranger à la campagne dont nous sommes victimes et que [*les Dreyfusards*] travaillent uniquement pour la Justice, la Vérité et l'Humanité ». Céard, by this loaded sentence, alludes to the wealth of Dreyfus' family of industrial magnates and the fact that the abstract ideals championed on the Dreyfusard side needed bankrolling to achieve notoriety. On its own it would have been a disingenuous and mannered slice of bigotry, but Céard goes on the offensive with a strong argument for the interestedness of the Dreyfusard agenda. He points out that the 'huis clos' nature of both Dreyfus' trial and the crucial portions of Esterhazy's is one of the most

common arguments in favour of revision; the secrecy of the proceedings was frequently alleged to have allowed justice to miscarry,[270] and indeed once the facts of the fabricated 'dossier secret' shown only to Dreyfus' judges and not his counsel became known such a charge was shown to have been valid.

However the truth of the fabrication had not been established at the time of this article, and Céard points out that trials *in camera* were not uncommon in the French legal system of the early Third Republic: "en effet, tous les jours, en cour d'assises, des individus sont jugés et condamnés, portes closes. Cependant personne jusqu'ici n'est intervenu en leur faveur. Est-ce parce que ces accusés sont généralement de pauvres hères…dont la réhabilitation ne rapporterait guère à quiconque oserait l'entreprendre ?". More specifically, other French officers had been convicted of treason in the recent past following similarly-run proceedings, and belief in their guilt was not attracting the same demurrals as Dreyfus'. And so it is that Céard's mouthpieces fear they are being duped by « cette localisation de la vérité, ce particularisme de l'humanité, ce système de concentrer la lumière, où ce qu'on appelle ainsi, sur un point et sur un homme unique ». It will be seen that Céard, like other anti-Dreyfusards, himself came to favour a local variant for truth based on a regionalist view of France, but here it is still conceived of as a flaw in the Dreyfusard case.

As in 'Virtuosité Littéraire', to whose substance Céard returns late in this article to re-present it to a new audience (the previous month's piece having gone out in *Le National*), the author's strategy is to complicate a discussion which, he believes, the Dreyfusards are attempting to oversimplify and cast in idealized terms. Céard consistently reintroduces psychological motivation into his analysis of the Affair. The confusion of the time was extreme, and Zola

[270] Louis Begley, *Why the Dreyfus Affair Matters* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2009), notes that Scheurer-Kestner, Zola's convertor to the Dreyfusard cause, had been troubled by the behind-closed-doors nature of the trial (p.126).

himself had just committed several factual errors in *J'Accuse* which were almost unavoidable, given the paucity of information available to those outside the French General Staff in January 1898. Then, the textuality of the *bordereau* appeared to many observers to be the only thread by which Dreyfusard arguments hung, and the extraordinary stakes involved in the growing political struggle fed by the Affair drove a natural sceptic such as Céard to deep wariness of their position.

His wariness extended, again in a paradigmatic anti-Dreyfusard move, to Zola and others' competence to judge the question, as the next section of the article asserts. It is here that Hugo and Balzac's legal interventions are re-invoked, in order to suggest that Zola is motivated chiefly by the urge to follow in their illustrious footsteps, rather than to break Dreyfus' shackles: "il s'est cru obligé de suivre l'exemple de glorieux devanciers; et comme eux, d'essayer du rôle de justicier". Céard is here tapping into a rich vein of anti-Zola rhetoric present long before the Affair arose. The older man was famously caricatured before a statue of Balzac, reverently returning its salute, by André Gill a full 20 years earlier.[271] Similarly to the 'particularisation' of Truth alleged at those campaigning for revision on legal grounds, Céard aims to dislodge the Dreyfusard arguments from the moral high ground their advocates seek to occupy. As he will develop in his later articles on Zola's role in Affair, "ce qu'on prend pour du hasard, pourrait bien être seulement une forme imprévue et logique de son tempérament ami de la bataille ». Indeed this battle, Céard implies, could be about to move off the page and into the streets. "M. Zola a pu espérer émouvoir dans la rue cette foule que ses épopées mettaient si pittoresquement en marche, sur le papier ».

As with the allegation of Zola's desire to follow Hugo and Balzac, Céard is here exhuming an old topos from past attacks on Zola's literary activity and using it to construct a

[271] Reproduced at http://expositions.bnf.fr/zola/portraits/02.htm. Retrieved 09/26/2012.

reading of his intervention in the Affair. The reference to the power (although the choice of 'pittoresquement' as an adverb constitutes damningly faint praise) of Zola's crowds and the description of his novels as epics evokes Jules Lemaître's most important article on Zola's work, which ends with its characterization as "une *épopée* pessimiste de l'animalité humaine".[272] Lemaître himself took the anti-Dreyfusard side and became a prominent member of the Ligue de la Patrie Française. The implication is clear; the brutish mobs which at times rampaged through the *Rougon-Macquart* cycle may now threaten Paris as a result of Zola's words; life will imitate art.

In truth, mob activity during the Dreyfus Affair was primarily instigated on the far right and driven by anti-Dreyfusard sentiment. It would culminate in Paul Déroulède's attempt to lead a coup d'état following the funeral of President Félix Faure, in February 1899.[273] Céard's analysis is thus tendentious, although as it predates Zola's trial (at which the power of the street first became clearly visible during the Affair) he is speaking more from a position of conjecture than reflection. Nevertheless Céard's eagerness to suggest that Dreyfusard mobs could endanger the peace appears to stem from malice or mischievousness rather than a legitimate fear, and an attempt to excite the concerns of the very bourgeois readers he was pretending to have speak for him as he did so. Under such a playful cover, 'La Ville d'Alceste' is thus a calculated articulation of Céard's anti-Dreyfusard stance, stopping short of affirming the ex-captain's guilt but subtly constellating discursive tropes used by Dreyfus and Zola's opponents into a form well-designed to command the readership's feelings.

---

[272] *Morceaux choisis de Jules Lemaitre*, ed. Rosine Melée (Boston: Ginn & co., 1896), p.35.
[273] Cahm, *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, pp.178-82.

During Zola's trial Céard published two articles addressing the Affair, one in *Le National* and the other in *L'Evénement*. The former, dated February the 10th, was entitled 'A Bas la France', a quote apparently taken from inside the courtroom. The trial captivated France, as journalists from Paris, the provinces and around the world swarmed to gather impressions from the chamber and fashionable society attended, turning the legal proceedings into theatre.[274] Céard appears to have gone from hearsay rather than a personal presence at the hearings, hence his choosing to concentrate on one line uttered from the audience in his contribution to *Le National*'s coverage.

He instantly touches on the dramatic nature of proceedings, but with heavy sarcasm:

> L'entrepreneur de cinématographe qui inventa le procès de M. Emile Zola, et lança les infinies citations que l'on sait pour faire défiler d'un seul coup devant son appareil tous les militaires de marque, tous les savants de réputation, tous les ministres passés et à venir et se donner d'un seul coup le spectacle d'une assemblée académique au milieu des uniformes de la revue de Longchamps [sic], risque fort de ne pas faire de brillantes affaires…le personnel qu'il attendait avec ses objectifs s'obstine absolument à ne pas vouloir servir de figurants.

In one brief paragraph (or, if one prefers, one long sentence) Céard summarizes perfectly both the illustriousness and the frequent uncooperativeness of the witness list drawn up by Zola's defence team, led by Ferdinand Labori and Albert Clemenceau, Georges' brother. More than the actual witnesses, however, man who had been dead for almost 20 years is cited as the clearest commentator on events: "il faut bien reconnaître que les séances de la Cour d'assises, comme dit

[274] ibid., pp.108-9.

le guide dans *Madame Bovary*, offrent "une parfait image du néant"". Even in 1880, Flaubert was the impeccable master for Céard that Zola could not be; the latter's ultimately unfounded literary theorizing and his penchant for self-promotion conflicted with the resigned distance Céard brought to his own literary activity, and for which he found a model in the man of Croisset.[275] The above words also underline the philosophical perspective the two men shared; 'néant' was an entity both Flaubert and Céard found prevalent in the world around them, and indeed it could be argued (although this is not the place) that Céard's first novel *Une Belle Journée* is the true fulfilment of Flaubert's wish to write "un livre sur rien".[276]

The fact that Céard is so quick to use the nascent art of cinema as a metaphor brings to mind current American right-wing arguments against Hollywood or 'Hollyweird', its frivolity and dislocation from what some call 'the real America'.[277] By associating Zola's defence with the practices of the cinema (again, the question of money is immediately insinuated into that description through the use of 'entrepreneur' as the imaginary protagonist) its authority and credibility are undermined.[278] Film had yet to achieve its status as an independent narrative art, and its cheap admission and spectacular nature separated it from the theatre or the private experience of consuming a novel.

Céard goes on to suggest that the secret documents the defence is demanding to see are an invention of theirs in which people are starting to believe purely because they are spoken of

---

[275] see, for instance, Nicholas White's discussion of the Flaubert-Zola polarity in *The Family in Crisis in Late Nineteenth Century French Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), p.14.

[276] Sylvie Thorel-Cailleteau, in *La Tentation du Livre sur Rien*, and David Baguley, in *Naturalist Fiction: the Entropic Vision*, have both advanced this claim.

[277] Conservative pundit Michelle Malkin, for instance, features the term as a subsection of her website collecting news stories exemplifying the idea: http://michellemalkin.com/category/hollyweird/. Retrieved 03/27/2013.

[278] The reference was purely speculative at the time, but would quickly become prescient as both Georges Méliès, best known for his *Le Voyage dans la Lune* of 1902, and the Pathé company would produce films chronicling the Affair. Much of Méliès' (in which he himself played an onscreen role) has survived.
The spectacular nature of the crisis' events and their involvement of the whole of French society made them natural soil for cinema entrepreneurs to exploit; even though passions and interest ran high on both sides, Céard here makes the suggestion that only his opponents are captivated by the courtroom drama.

so often. The ever-increasing length of proceedings was a target for wit that Céard did not fail to strike; originally planned to occupy three days,[279] the trial eventually lasted over a fortnight and Céard claims that "pareils aux spectateurs, en route vers l'Odéon, lesquels partent jeunes du boulevard et arrivent vieux à leurs fauteuils d'orchestre, les jurés encore verts à l'heure du tirage au sort rentreront infailliblement chez eux avec les cheveux blancs des vieillards".

Once more the performing arts appear metaphorically, as part of the farcical tone Céard was not alone in employing to describe the libel trial. However, his wryness is directed exclusively at features of the proceedings for which the Dreyfusards are directly or indirectly responsible, such as the number of witnesses or the inability to produce secret files. On the other side (as one must reasonably locate it), such pearls as the judge, Delegorgue's, refrain of "la question ne sera pas posée!" each time the defence lawyers attempted to insert Dreyfus' 1894 trial into their questioning pass unmentioned. This despite the quintessentially Flaubertian humour of a legal yes-man obstinately repeating his mantra as events threatened to slip from his grasp. Indeed it recalls the repeated "Dépêche-toi, Ernestine!" which drive the main character, Mme. Duhamain, to consider adultery when her husband embarrasses her with his eagerness to leave the *soirée dansante* in Céard's own *Une Belle Journée*.[280] On that occasion, the entire restaurant ends up repeating the vacuous phrase back at them, but Céard refrains from meting out the same treatment to Delegorgue.

From absent documents he turns to fleeing witnesses, touching on the doctor's notes provided by some to avoid appearing in court. This prompts another literary comparison, with Alphonse Daudet's first realist novel *Fromont Jeune et Risler Aîné*. Sidonie Chèbe, the ambitious heartbreaker featured there, has similar trouble inducing guests to frequent her

[279] Mitterand, *Zola* v.III, p.400.
[280] Henry Céard, *Une Belle Journée* (Paris: Charpentier, 1881), p.58.

afternoon receptions – more clearly still than with the cinema, such a comparison is distinctly unflattering to Zola and his team. Sidonie's self-interest and desire to rise socially at the expense of the good people who place their trust in her echo the motivations Céard had recently ascribed to the Dreyfusards in 'La Ville d'Alceste'. The comparison provides further evidence of how consistently Céard viewed the Affair through a literary prism. Time and again real-life events are explicated through a comparison with scenes or characters from French texts. Indeed he wonders, given the vanity and length of the trial, "que vont faire les jurés?...En lisant quel livre tueront-ils leurs longues heures d'inaction?" Nor, I would suggest, is it a coincidence that Flaubert and Daudet are the authors chosen for the task. As was noted in Chapter 2, suggesting their superiority to Zola, even to the extent of alleging Daudet to be the true naturalist, was a commonplace of contemporary criticism, and Céard transferred this from the literary to the political realm.

In the absence of developments that might shed light on the Affair, the two interventions Céard chooses to retain are those of a young woman whose sentimental life the defense called on her to recount, according to him "en dehors de toute galanterie, en dehors de toute humanité".[281] More strongly, the defence is said to have been "abominablement hantée du désir de la salissure universelle". This can be read as a further reactivation of anti-Zolian charges from two decades before; Zola the pornographer and Zola the scatologist were ever-present in caricature and hostile journalism at that time, and continued to be through the completion of the *Rougon-Macquart*. To avarice and self-promotion Céard adds legal molestation on the charge sheet

[281] He does not name her, but it must be Ida de Boulancy, Esterhazy's lover and the recipient of the 'lettre du uhlan' in which he revelled in the idea of slaughtering Frenchmen. De Boulancy refused to testify at Zola's trial, alleging heart problems, and despite repeated efforts by Zola's lawyers, she remained absent. Their persistence allowed commentators such as Céard to cast them as unchivalrous.
See *Le Procès Zola, Compte Rendu Sténographique "In-Extenso"*, v.1 (Paris: Stock, 1898), especially pp. 68-71, 82-3, 132-5, 194-5, 205-12, 232-5, 301-4, 509-13, for the details of Labori and Clemenceau's pursuit of de Boulancy's testimony.

directed at Zola and his lawyers. The phrase 'salissure universelle' conjoins what Céard saw as the harassment of a young woman with the stain being visited on France's reputation by the case; implicitly, France herself was suffering the same indignities as Ida de Boulancy. Zola himself is targeted for his outburst that he did not wish to acknowledge the law, quickly revised to mitigate some of the damage it had caused to his side.[282] The sequence allows Céard to quip that « soudainement, le même M. Zola s'est avisé de reprendre son discours pour affirmer qu'il respectait néanmoins la loi encore qu'il la méprisait, et qu'il espérait beaucoup de la justice en laquelle du reste – son procès le prouvait – il n'avait aucune confiance ».

Céard then reaches the *pointe* of his article, the revelation of sorts that dawned after the futility of the trial: "ainsi le procès retombait dans la futilité et dans l'ennui, quand un comparse habile à formuler la position ambiguë de la question a soudainement proféré ce cri : - A bas la France ! ». Despite the unidentified origin of this cry, Céard immediately assimilates it to Zola's own ideas with still thicker sarcasm:

> On souhaitait la lumière. La voici tout entière. La vérité était en marche. Nous savons maintenant où elle aboutit. Maintenant, les esprits réservés ne sauraient plus hésiter et demeurer incertains dans l'opinion à concevoir et dans le parti à prendre. On les a dupés quand on leur a laissé entendre qu'il s'agissait d'une virtuosité esthétique de la justice éternelle…Le but secret poursuivi avec la coalition avérée des étrangers indûment et perfidement mêlée à nos querelles ; c'est de mettre à bas la France.
>
> Au moins, voilà qui est clair.

[282] Reinach, *Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus* v. 3 (Paris: Editions de la Revue Blanche, 1903), p.346. Zola, having interrupted proceedings during Lucie Dreyfus' testimony at his trial, was cut short by Delegorgue's question "Vous connaissez l'article 52 de la loi de 1881?", to which he replied "Je ne connais pas la loi, et je ne veux pas la connaitre". The unfortunate remark, which Zola tried unsuccessfully to amend, brought howls of outrage and derision in the courtroom, and gave Céard ammunition for his sarcasm.

Like in 'La Ville d'Alceste', Céard tries to pull the ideals averred by the Dreyfusards down into the realm of duplicity, in this case treasonous duplicity in league with "la coalition avérée des étrangers". As previously stated, the foreign press and foreign public opinion were almost as involved in the Affair's vicissitudes as were their French counterparts, but in sharp contrast were overwhelmingly Dreyfusard.[283] This allowed anti-Dreyfusards to tap into the xenophobia of their audience, and present attempts to bring about a revision of Dreyfus' trial or criticize the army's actions in the Affair as a foreign plot. Implicit (or, in some cases albeit not Céard's, explicit) in this rhetorical strategy was of course the charge that French Jews were 'not really French', and that their loyalties did not rest as firmly with the French nation as those of their Catholic counterparts were claimed to do.[284] The chain of reasoning held that exposing the army as at fault in Dreyfus' treatment would undermine its morale, thus weakening its ability to defend the country from a new attack by Germany that many (with good reason) saw as inexorable, thus accomplishing the destruction of the French nation.

Céard therefore adds another strain of anti-Dreyfusard thought to his writings on the Affair, stressing the threat of war with Germany as a primordial concern even though in 1881, he had been happy to ridicule such a mentality in the pages of *Une Belle Journée.*[285] The constant

---

[283] Michael Burns, *The Dreyfus Affair: a Documentary History*, (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), pp.150-1.

[284] In *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, Proust would have Charlus take this attitude to its logical, yet paradoxical, conclusion: "les journaux disent que Dreyfus a commis une trahison contre sa patrie...le crime est inexistant, [Dreyfus] aurait commis un crime contre sa patrie s'il avait trahi la Judée, mais qu'est-ce qu'il a à voir avec la France?" (*A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, v.2 [Paris: Gallimard, 1961], p.289).

[285] The foolish lothario Trudon's revanchism appears on two occasions in that novel. On the first, he tries to convince Mme. Duhamain of the merits of the *café-concert* scene: "C'était vraiment un beau spectacle! on y pleurait la perte de l'Alsace et le morcellement de la Lorraine; le patriotisme y était exalté en même temps que les sabots du régiment de la Moselle..." (*Une Belle Jounrée*, p.158).
Later, the narrator reveals of Trudon that "chez lui, il portait des pantoufles de tapisserie où l'Alsace, sur le pied droit, la Lorraine, sur le pied gauche, étaient figurées en costume national et pleurant, le corsage orné d'une cocarde tricolore, cependant qu'au travers d'un encadrement de houblons verts, des mots en laine jaune, couraient sur un liston avec cette devise: Elle attend." (pp. 198-9).

between the two moments is his disabused belief in the overriding importance of tarnished self-interest to understanding human behaviour.[286] However, because by 1898 he had himself found a real-world belief (in the danger of a new European war to France's survival) to add to his literarily-inspired elitism, he no longer mocked the mainstream bourgeois perspective on a matter such as the Dreyfus Affair but rather turned his contempt toward the 'outsiders', like Zola, who failed to agree with him about the peril facing the national interest. It cannot, therefore, be said that Céard's shift from support of Zola during the quarrel of naturalism to knowing critic during the Dreyfus Affair stemmed from an aesthetic realignment that mirrored itself in a political stance. Rather, it came from the development and nationalistic turn of his political consciousness, showing the limits of Céard's aestheticization of the crisis. As the Affair wore on, he would never abandon literature as a frame of reference for his commentaries, but purely political concerns would increasingly affirm themselves.

The same week, Céard employed a completely different tone in addressing Zola's trial – a direct appeal to the man himself entitled 'Lettre à Zola'. Going out in *L'Evénement* two days after *Le National* carried 'A bas la France', 'Lettre à Zola' breaks with Céard's first three Dreyfus articles both in its avowed recipient and in the courtesy of its tone. Gone is the arid humour and veiled partisanship discussed above, replaced by an apparently conciliatory attempt to bring an old friend to his senses. This is established by the single sentence which opens the text: "Il est encore temps, mon cher Zola". The first full paragraph then begins with the isolated imperative "Ecoutez". It continues with an enumeration of the turbulence spreading through the French nation driven by Zola's writings on the Affair: "A cause de votre générosité que personne

---

In both passages, Céard literally drags the ideals of patriotism down by conjoining them to a description of footwear. The wry barbs directed at the pretension of others' ideals prefigure the tone of, notably, 'A Bas la France'.

[286] Céard was particularly fond of the moralist tradition in French literature, notably his fellow Champenois La Fontaine, but also Pascal and Chamfort (C.A. Burns, *Henry Céard et le Naturalisme*, pp. 171, 381).

ne suspecte et sur laquelle vous vous égarez vous-même, Alger, l'autre jour, s'est soulevé. Il y a eu du sang à propos de vos phrases…il n'y a plus de police que pour vous ». Through the second-person construction Zola is presented to the newspaper's readers as fundamentally blameless in recent events, a good man misled by those around him (a point Céard will go on to stress more clearly) and unaware of the power of his own words to engender real danger both to himself and to every Frenchman.

Céard then portrays himself as a "vieil ami [qui]…se doit de fournir pour vous à la foule qui vous hue, les tranquilles explications que vous ne lui donnez pas ». He urges Zola to read and consider the 'Lettre' « au nom de la Patrie », returning to the jeopardy in which Zola has placed France. The older man is addressed as someone of "bravoure littéraire constante…vous êtes le même homme qui [en 1868] disait: 'Je ferai sans doute des mécontents, étant bien décidé à dire de grosses et terribles vérités' ». As will be seen, this passage is the chief measure of Céard's hypocrisy in the 'Lettre à Zola', as later articles will instead stress the divergence and decadence of Zola's Dreyfus-era thought and writing from his earlier texts. At the same time, Céard's established trend of using character analysis to understand the course of the Affair is maintained by the statement that "vous avez parlé dans la logique de votre tempérament et de votre caractère". However, according to the younger man this continuity of motivation is precisely the cause of Zola's impending downfall, because the same method as that of his novels is being applied to faulty documents.

> Vous qui avez si éloquement [sic] enseigné à la littérature la recherche et le respect du document humain, c'est ce document humain aujourd'hui qui se retourne contre vous et va faire de vous une victime. Le document humain que vous sollicitiez dans l'illusion que

> seul il pouvait fournir des preuves de vérité, regardez, je vous prie, ce qu'il est dans ce procès où vous l'invoquez et où il ne vous apporte que de la bassesse et du mensonge.

By this claim Céard maintains the topos of Zola's inability to distinguish between the real and literary worlds. 'Illusion' and 'vérité', the goals at which he was aiming, commingle with the 'bassesse' and 'mensonge' which he has actually reaped. 'Bassesse' in particular was a continual charge levelled at Zola in the *Rougon-Macquart* years, even by his supposed friends at times. For instance, Edmond de Goncourt recalls that at the premiere of a Zola theatrical adaptation at which they were both the author's guests, Alphonse Daudet turned to him and murmured: "le comble de la bassesse".[287] Thus even in his plea to the man himself, Céard slyly reactivates past anti-Zolian rhetoric in the new context of the Affair.

He continues his discussion of the "document humain" by urging Zola: "Regardez-le!". His erstwhile colleague is not only deaf but also blind to the reality of the Affair. There then follows an extended assertion, with great specificity, that the dossier supporting Dreyfus' innocence is fabricated: "Il est fait de lettres volées, il est fait d'écritures falsifiées, il est fait de correspondances dérobées, il est fait de photographies perfides, où cette science que vous exaltez comme un excellent véhicule de lumière, s'emploie criminellement pour la fausseté, pour la trahison et pour l'infamie ». This is a curious set of claims, and features some more Céardian sleight of hand as he, in deploying the anaphoric list introduced by "il est fait de…" which seems to echo the tolling conclusion of 'J'Accuse...!' itself, paraphrases himself in order to exaggerate the list of misdeeds directed at Zola's current associates. "Lettres volées" and "correspondances dérobées" are of course entirely synonymous, and the historian of the Affair is entitled to wonder what "photographies perfides" Céard could have had in mind. As for the twice-mentioned letters,

[287] Mitterand, *Zola* v.II, p.657.

the reference is to the recent publication of samples from Esterhazy's correspondence chosen to illustrate his disloyalty to the French nation and army, most notably the famous 'Uhlan letter' in which he assured his cousin and lover Mme. de Boulancy that "si ce soir on venait me dire que je serais tué demain comme capitaine de Uhlans en sabrant des Français, je serais certainement parfaitement heureux".[288]

It is hard to find a good explanation for why Céard would be repelled by the theft of this correspondence and apparently untroubled by the profoundly unpatriotic thoughts it contains; by referring to it as stolen, he logically accepts its authenticity as being by Esterhazy's hand, something the major himself was publicly unwilling to do.[289] Although 'La Ville d'Alceste' attempted to expose inconsistencies in the Dreyfusard position, in his criticism of the "documents humains" of the Affair Céard commits the same error of which he had accused his opponents. It seems, then, that Céard was only willing to admit the "passion…rancune…envie…lâchetés" he goes on to evoke as motivations on the Dreyfusard side. As with Zola, 'passion' takes on great weight in Céard's writing on the Affair, but unlike the older man, he only uses it negatively, against his opponents, where Zola had allowed its meaning to float between contexts.

Céard returns to the difference between literature and political intervention by informing Zola that "vous ne vous trouvez ici ni dans une position de littérateur, ni dans une posture de philanthrope…des gens habiles et qui ne vous trompent pas pour la première fois, vous ont fait tomber dans le traquenard de l'Affaire Dreyfus, comme jadis ils vous ont poussé à choir dans le traquenard de l'élection académique". This undermines Zola's credibility, a crucial element in his defence at the trial. The refusal by the Ministry of Defence to release any documents

[288] Cahm, *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, p.82
[289] Henriette Cavaignac Dardenne, *Lumières sur l'Affaire Dreyfus* (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1964), p.113.

pertaining to the Affair left him principally relying on his good reputation as a source of support for the accusations contained in 'J'Accuse...!'. Zola's 'Déclaration au Jury' asserted that "Dreyfus est innocent, je le jure, j'y engage ma vie, mon honneur… ».[290] By raising the spectre of Zola's repeated and unsuccessful attempts to gain a seat in the Académie Française, Céard could establish a precedent for Zola's temperament leading him astray in approaching a politically-tinged task. The flood of caricatures these electoral failures drew in the French press of the 1890s[291] would also have come immediately to the mind of contemporary readers, dissuading many of those undecided from giving Zola credence.

In closing the article, not unexpectedly, Céard returns to the imperative to issue a series of exhortations in Zola's direction. He raises the theme of foreign interference for the first time in the 'Lettre': "dites que…vous voulez faire cesser une agitation qui compromet l'existence même du pays, et que, citoyen français, ayant exprimé ses idées, sous sa responsabilité, vous déclinez toute alliance avec ces étrangers dont l'acclamation vous compromet et vous répugne ». The reprise of the article published two days earlier becomes firmer as he pleads "dites que malgré ce qu'on a eu le deuil d'entendre dans les corridors de la Cour d'assises, le cri 'Vive Zola!' n'est pas aujourd'hui synonyme de 'A bas la France !' ». After a final warning of the consequences Céard sees resulting from further obstinacy by Zola, he closes with the same "Il est encore temps, mon cher Zola" by which he began.

The late Colin Burns, author of the only major study of Céard and his importance to the naturalist movement, claims that "dans ces articles de Céard sur l'Affaire Dreyfus on ne trouvera

---

[290] Zola, *La Vérité en Marche*, p.109.

[291] See Baudson, Pierre, "Zola et la caricature, d'après les recueils Céard du Musee Carnavalet", *Les Cahiers Naturalistes*, XI, n° 29, 1965, pp. 43-60. Testifying to his ever-increasing antipathy to Zola, Céard kept a collection of caricatures of the older man which has remained in the holdings of the Musée Carnavalet, where he worked for over a decade. The collection is now the subject of a book by Agnès Sandras, *Quand Céard Collectionnait Zola* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2012).

point d'injures personnelles, ni la moindre insinuation que Zola ait agi malhonnêtement…Céard, à notre avis, se conduit en 1898 avec une droiture parfaite".[292] The first half of the claim is true; the second is not. Insinuations of every other sort are dotted throughout Céard's Dreyfus-era articles, occasionally going beyond the bounds of logic in their attempts to accentuate the disparity between Dreyfusard rhetoric and Dreyfusard motivation. Moreover, although personal insults and accusations of dishonesty against Zola are absent, Céard is far from reluctant to evoke what he sees as Zola's personal failures and to tap into a pre-existing corpus of caricature and insult tied to Zola's literary activity.

It is thus no surprise that, when Zola died four years later, there was a clear dislocation between Céard's public and private responses to the event. In the article he gave to *L'Evénement* in the aftermath of Zola's demise from carbon monoxide poisoning, caused by the (possibly deliberate) blockage of his bedroom fireplace, Céard expresses his affection for Zola as a friend and his faith in his oeuvre's posterity: "de belles pages survivront en pleine lumière et devant l'ampleur et la conscience du travail, elle saluera Emile Zola comme un maître". In contrast, the letter to Huysmans a few months later, cited earlier, played host to a less rosy prognosis: "la pierre de son tombeau est-elle assez lourde et définitive; j'ai bien peur que rien n'en sorte plus et que même sa mémoire ait péri tout entière. Je m'effraie quand je constate mon impuissance actuelle à relire ses livres ».[293] One could portray the *Evénement* article as a kind massaging of his views following such a traumatic event, but Céard's rhetorical practices in the Dreyfus-era articles point rather to a duplicity in his attitude to Zola that he shared with Huysmans himself.[294]

[292] C.A. Burns, *Henry Céard et le Naturalisme*, p.246.
[293] Quoted in Burns, p.255.
[294] See Halina Suwala's work on the later Huysmans' attitudes to Zola in *Autour de Zola et du Naturalisme*.

Céard's only reflections on the Affair not contained in the pages of *Le National* or *L'Evénement* came immediately after Zola's had been sentenced to the maximum year in prison and 3,000 franc fine. The editor of *Le Gaulois*, a colourful character named Arthur Meyer,[295] asked Céard to produce an article explaining to its readers Zola's actions and their origin. Céard titled it 'Après le Procès', anticipating that of Brunetière's much better-known response to the trial; the article appeared in the February the 25th edition. It is presented with an editorial note specifying that "L'acte de M. Zola, judiciairement clos, reste moralement un problème. Il nous a paru intéressant d'en demander l'explication à l'un des hommes qui doivent à une vieille intimité avec M. Zola le moyen de le bien connaître et à un talent très personnel le moyen de le juger. »

The editor is thus interested in Céard's contribution for much the same reasons we are today; his intimate knowledge of Zola, and an aesthetic sense that allowed him to turn that knowledge into distinct contributions to discourse on the Dreyfus Affair. Zola's actions are characterized as a moral problem, almost a mystery, to be elucidated only by an initiate. And, in *fin-de-siècle* France, such a problem was uncomplicatedly taken to be the preserve of the novelist; it was not only Céard's connection to Zola that gave him authority to judge Dreyfus' defender, as the terse introduction made clear. While his 'intimité' gave him the raw materials, the editor asserted that it was his 'talent très personnel' that made the analysis possible.

We have seen that Zola himself, despite a career-long hostility to psychology, softened his stance in *La Vérité en Marche* in order to present the Affair in a manner that might be more convincing to the public. Because the political stakes of the crisis were surrounded by layers of both collective and individual psychology - the crowds on the courthouse steps, contrasted with

[295] Meyer (1844-1924) was Jewish, and had duelled Edouard Drumont over the latter's insults of his background. Yet his paper catered to high society, and he was by turns royalist, anti-Dreyfusard, and a Catholic convert.

the 'problem' of Zola's choices - they appeared as already aestheticized to readers and editors alike, opening up a space into which authors could step and find an audience for their positions.

Part of the motivation for the article's *exergue* is of the course the imperative to drive circulation by suggesting that only in this issue of this newspaper can answers be found. At the same time, such a strategy could not succeed had there not been a feeling of perplexity among many French people at Zola's conduct. 'Après le Procès' is thus a document attesting to the prevalence of confusion, and not only anger, as an emotional response to the Affair and particularly the Dreyfusards' attempts to force a revision of the 1894 trial. Faith in the army had simply not been widely questioned in the previous 25 years, despite the presence of a subgenre of 'romans militaires', thickest in the late 1880s, which had presented often bitter critiques of barracks life.[296]

Céard makes it clear from his opening remarks that he considers Zola's conviction justified, calling him "condamné comme il convenait" and speaking of "excès légitimement punis par la cour d'assises". The importance of nationalism to this judgement is made clear by Céard's describing Zola's transgressions as "attaques à la patrie". This is legally inaccurate since Zola had been on trial for criminal libel against the army (the charge was not the equivalent of, for instance, that of 'insulting Turkey' which one can still face in that country)[297] but it rests on the common anti-Dreyfusard conflation of *armée* and *patrie*. In fact there is a further conflation, since the specific libels Zola had knowingly committed were against the two military tribunals that had tried Dreyfus and Esterhazy, especially his accusation that the latter had acquitted the accused "par ordre". This illustrates the synecdochic nature of such a mode of thought, taking the

[296] The best-known of these is Lucien Descaves' *Sous-Offs* (1889), which resulted in a libel trial of its own; Descaves was acquitted after a mass mobilization of writers, including Zola, in support of his cause. See Christophe Charle, *La Naissance des Intellectuels*, pp.111-13.
[297] Article 301 of the Turkish penal code: the legal text can be seen, in Turkish, at http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kanunlar/k5759.html. Retrieved 09/22/2012.

part represented by these few military judges and using it to stand for the French fatherland as a whole.

The other key theme of the first sentence is its wry, subtly parodic reuse of Zola's own avowed literary method from the *Rougon-Macquart* era as an analytical template for the current article. Céard explains that "il reste à savoir par quelle fatalité de son tempérament il a été conduit aux excès… ». Such a phrase could easily have been drawn from one of Zola's late-1870s articles defending his work and that of his literary allies, including Céard himself. Indeed Zola himself, in an article dedicated both to *Une Belle Journée* and to Huysmans' *En Ménage*, had described the author of 'Après le Procès' as hailing from a group of "sceptiques, mais des sceptiques braves, résolus à aller au bout des faits".[298] Zola had, then, in his day been as ready to explain Céard's literature through temperament as Céard was now to return the favour.

However Céard here verges on denying Zola free will with his use of the term 'fatalité'. Since the characters of the *Rougon-Macquart* were in most cases presented as behaving as they did due to the pathological *fêlure* inherited from family matriarch Tante Dide, to place Zola in the same situation was far from flattering. Indeed Zola had specifically opposed the charge of fatalism from naturalism's opponents: "il faut préciser: nous ne sommes pas fatalistes, nous sommes déterministes, ce qui n'est point la même chose."[299] Not only, then, is Céard diminishing Zola's stature, but he is once more reactivating a past literary criticism of the other man in a manner that only those who knew him best could achieve.

Céard's opposition to his former mentor is again constructed in aesthetic terms. While Zola justified much of his intervention in the Affair in the same terms he had used to defend naturalism, with concepts such as 'vérité' foremost in his rhetoric, Céard relegates him from his

[298] Emile Zola, *Une Campagne* (article 'Céard et Huysmans'), (Paris: Charpentier, 1888), p.257.
[299] Emile Zola, *Le Roman Expérimental* (article 'Le Roman Expérimental'), p.29.

authorial position in the *Rougon-Macquart* to that of one of his characters. As with the mention of Zola's frequent failure to be elected to the Académie, such a move erodes the subject's credibility and authority. Céard explicitly underlines the aesthetic root of his analysis in a sentence placed on its own between the opening two paragraphs: "c'est un problème d'esthétique que ni l'accusation ni la defense n'ont cherché à résoudre". The problem is aesthetic because Céard is treating Zola as one of his characters, not as an independent judicial person.

The parodic nature of the enterprise becomes clearer as Céard proceeds to relate an anecdote involving Zola and gherkins as an explanation for his recent conduct. The story in question is factually accurate; a few years earlier, Zola's bags had been searched at St. Lazare station as he returned to Paris from his summer home in Médan. At the time there was still an *octroi* tax in force on agricultural goods being brought into Paris from the provinces. In the course of the search the *cornichon* jar was shattered, the incident prompting Zola to take up his pen and incite Parisians to protest the continued imposition of the tax, telling them they had started revolutions over less. Céard concludes that "M. Emile Zola demandait des barricades contre un inconvénient assez médiocre, et, en termes enflammés, méconnaissait la loi, dans un débarcadère, comme récemment il déclarait vouloir l'ignorer, en cour d'assises ». Ironically, Céard is employing a legal strategy – impugning a witness by invoking a past precedent in which their actions and judgment would be judged by an average observer to be unreasonable – and offering it as the key to the « problème esthétique" he set out to solve.

He then explicitly casts Zola's behaviour in both contexts as medically flawed: "les observateurs trouveront là le secret pathologique de l'intervention singulière et du manque de mesure de M. Emile Zola dans la question Dreyfus ». Zola as medical specimen, his mind dissected by Céard for the readers of *Le Gaulois*: the strategy recalls the excesses of the so-called

'Manifeste des Cinq' (actually entitled 'La Terre. A Emile Zola') published by a group of young naturalists in 1887, and which accused the author of *La Terre* of possessing a "sensorium morbide" leading him to misrepresent the life of the countryside and to fall away from the artistic standards he had set himself. The five in question - Paul Bonnetain, J.H. Rosny, Lucien Descaves, Paul Margueritte and Gustave Guiches - had no personal connection to Zola, unlike the earlier Médan five of which Céard himself had been a part. The self-conscious inversion of *Les Soirées de Médan*'s earlier show of solidarity with Zola by the five younger authors of the 'Manifeste' may have been orchestrated by Edmond de Goncourt, ever resentful of Zola's success and glad of his own influence over younger writers.[300]

Céard then proceeds to focus on Zola's 'passion', employing quotes from the man himself to portray him as a figure lost in the fog of his own enthusiasms, distorting the facts in favour of the notions his passion leads him to conceive. "La passion, pour lui, est une faculté presque divine. Elle ne relève que d'elle-même, devient indépendante de l'humanité, et supérieure à la justice ». Passion was indeed vital to Zola's case during the Affair, and we have observed its workings in Chapter 1. Céard appears to meet Zola head-on by singling out the term as explanatory: yet it can be seen that his characterization is inaccurate. Zola's conception of 'passion' is not consistently noble; he is perfectly willing to use it with negative implications about the anti-Dreyfusards. It is more epiphenomenal, a symptom rather than a cause.

Céard and Zola are thus using the term in very different ways, since we have seen the former's preference for giving it a negative slant, notably in 'La Ville d'Alceste'. In fact, Céard is trying to present their definitions as fundamentally opposed, rather than merely unaligned, by claiming that Zola sees passion as quasi-divine. It is clear, then, that the intense emotions

[300] Henry Bauer, among others, suggested to Zola that Goncourt's hand in the 'Manifeste' was evident (Mitterand, *Zola* v.II, p.854).

aroused by the Affair were the subject of critical reflection, with Céard in particular attempting to define 'passion' as a functional term that could explain Zola's engagement and, by extension, much of what was taking place in France at the time. Concepts more commonly the preserve of literature were being dragged out of that domain and subjected to semantic pressure in the controversies surrounding the Affair.

Céard tellingly speaks of Zola's « sincérité à changer d'idée fixe », which recalls his aesthetic disillusionment with Zola's literary theories. In a letter to René Dumesnil many years after Zola's death, Céard explained that « ayant découvert la vanité de la méthode, je me suis désintéressé de l'œuvre…dans ses livres, il employait les documents, sans critique, et les ramenant toujours à son système préconçu, et à un plan arrêté d'avance… ».[301] In the same letter, he instantly conjoins this aesthetic disillusionment with his attitude towards the Dreyfus Affair: "je me suis même détourné de l'homme quand il devint le champion de Dreyfus. A la façon dont, dans ses livres, il employait les documents, sans critique, et les ramenant toujours à son système préconçu...j'ai douté des renseignements qu'on lui fournissait et douté plus encore de la manière violente dont il les mettait en bataille".

Writing in 1916, Céard's story on the Affair was, then, still the same as it had been during the crisis: this is notable for two reasons. The first is that, in between times, Dreyfus had been rehabilitated to the Army and fully exonerated by the Cour de Cassation; these developments appear not to have shaken Céard's scepticism towards Dreyfusard arguments. The second is that, with World War I raging, the 'Union Sacrée' had imposed a four-year truce on the previously antagonistic factions put in place by the Affair; even Maurice Barrès, for instance, would soften his anti-Semitism after being struck by Jewish patriotism during the conflict. Yet Céard returns to the Affair at the height of the war when, discussing Zola, he could have stayed silent.

[301] Cited in C.A. Burns, *Henry Céard et le Naturalisme*, p.255.

Just as the hidden cause of the « Manifeste » was the inability of the five young writers who signed it to break through financially into an over-saturated literary market, leading them to blame Zola for his lack of support,[302] so Céard's critiques of Zola in the Dreyfus Affair stemmed in part from his lost faith in the validity of Zola's literary method. In both cases the corresponding disillusionment resulted in a turning of the gun on Zola, in mockery of his compositional procedures to denigrate the current enterprise in which he was engaged (the publication of a new novel in 1887, the defence of Dreyfus in 1898). In Céard's case the reservations could be deemed justified. In the view of most current criticism, defending *Le Roman Expérimental* from a methodological perspective is a thankless task. Its value is generally conceived in rhetorical terms, as an indication of the consciousness-raising Zola was seeking to achieve with his reading public of the time, a testament to how naturalist writing attempted to demarcate itself from earlier groups, or a metaphoric reflection on the meaning of narrative.[303] Such value was nil in Céard's eyes, however; he had craved the literal truth of the doctrine. Were it not for the persistence of his subtextual digs at the older man, his criticism of Zola's role might be considered reasoned.

Céard continues his strategy of exposing Zola's relativism by asserting "reste à savoir ce qu'il appelle la lumière, de quelle façon il entend la vérité, et quel sens il attache à ces deux mots abstraits, dont la signification n'est jamais que relative, subordonnée et contingente ». The answer is swift in coming : « M. Emile Zola appelle lumière ce qui lui semble le mieux d'accord avec ses sentiments. Il nomme vérité la démonstration qu'il fait lui-même de ses propres paradoxes ». Note the difference from the 'Lettre à Zola' published less than a fortnight before.

---

[302] See David Baguley, *Naturalist Fiction: the Entropic Vision* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), pp.24-7 for the paradoxes of the 'Manifeste' and its publication. Baguley argues that "Zola's five *detractors* of 1887 were motivated by the same ambitions that ten years earlier had led five other young writers to *defend* him." (p.27). Céard had, of course, been one of the earlier defenders.

[303] See Henri Mitterand's discussion of the essay in *Zola* v.II, pp.504-5.

While both depict the author of 'J'Accuse' as misguided in his engagement, the earlier article had absolved Zola of blame for this state of affairs, impeaching instead the unscrupulousness of Zola's associates and the dubious origin of the documents with which he was being provided. Zola's literary method was given credence, with only the reliability of its sources having changed from the *Rougon-Macquart* days.

In 'Après le Procès', the criticism runs much deeper. The method of the 'document humain' is itself vitiated by the author's temperament, which causes any document with which he is presented to be reconstructed in line with his feelings and fixations. Céard returns to the criticism he had respectfully offered in 1880, when *Le Roman Expérimental* was published in France. At the time he wrote Zola a letter in which he highlighted the "sophisme capital" the text contained:

> Claude Bernard, quand il institue une expérience, sait parfaitement dans quelles conditions elle se produira et sous l'influence exacte de quelles lois déterminées…En outre, il a en main le moyen précis de vérifier toutes ses expériences. En est-il identiquement le même pour le romancier ?..Les lois du cerveau n'étant que bien vaguement formulées, au lieu d'aboutir à une réalité scientifique, comme Claude Bernard, il aboutit simplement à une hypothèse, vraisemblable sans doute, mais qu'il ne peut appuyer sur aucun fait et qui laisse prise à toutes les discussions.[304]

In 'Après le Procès' Céard paraphrases himself, speaking of how « Claude Bernard opérait toujours sur des substances et sur des quantités nouvelles également déterminées à l'avance ». This leads to a much stronger charge against Zola than 18 years before, namely that

[304] Cited in Baguley, *Naturalist Fiction,* p. 243

"à la faveur de cette passion…il crée à la fois l'expérience, les éléments de l'expérience, le résultat surtout, et fournit comme vérité efficace ce qui est seulement le résultat de son application acharnée, de son imagination puissante, et le produit arbitraire du génie de son rêve ». Reaching back into his earlier aesthetic disagreements with Zola provides Céard with the substance of his current political critique.

Other parts of this section of the article can again make 'Après le Procès' seem a close cousin of '*La Terre*. A Emile Zola'. Céard strays into *ad hominem* critique, with further suggestions of its subject's mental incompetence. For instance, he shows his readers "M. Emile Zola enfermé pendant des mois devant son encrier, reclus dans le plan de son roman comme les cénobites dans les cellules d'une chartreuse, et retiré du monde…cette œuvre à la fin le sidère et l'hypnotise. Ne vivant plus que par elle, il arrive à la croire vivante… ». This could be an intertext with the line from the 1887 attack citing "des manies de moine solitaire" as the reason for Zola's literary decline. In both cases the increasing amount of time Zola spent in Médan rather than Paris, following his 1878 purchase of a property there, is evoked as a corrupting factor in his perception of literary and legal reality. Apparently his younger peers judged that too much time 'alone' in Seine-et-Oise[305] was leading to bouts of masturbation, mental and/or physical, which were making him go metaphorically blind.

The shared monastic metaphor points to the common gendering of truth in French discourse in the period. It was observed in Chapter 1 that Zola's own aesthetic writings are littered with references to "vérité virile" and similar terms, associating a strong command of reality with masculinity and sexual productivity. By dressing Zola at his writing-desk in monk's robes, the younger naturalists were casting doubt on his truth-claims concerning the work

[305] Médan is now situated in the department of Yvelines. Between 1790 and 1968 (and hence throughout Zola's lifetime), it was a *commune* of the erstwhile department of Seine-et-Oise.

produced there. The wasted seed of his solitary pursuits was not flowering into literary validity. This metaphor continues to be employed at a subliminal level as Céard notes that when the Affair reignited Zola had just finished *Paris*, a novel in which he had "exalté l'avènement futur de la bonté, de la fraternité et de la justice". With this in mind, Céard claims, "on conçoit aisément comment, tout en sueur encore de son plaidoyer écrit, trouvant hors de la littérature une occasion de pratiquer les vertus dont il se jugeait naturellement le missionnaire et l'apôtre, il soit entré en guerre, et soit devenu le champion du pire des condamnés d'état ». Taken together with the previous reference to Zola as a "cénobite", the suggestion is that his perspiration was not necessarily of a purely literary origin. On another note, Dreyfus is described as the "pire des condamnés d'état", which is one of the few discussions Céard makes of the man who gave his name to the Affair. It also conflicts, as will be seen, with a later and more thorough consideration of Dreyfus' actions. In 'Après le Procès', Céard's sole concern is to drive home a vision of Zola as a man bewitched by his literary passions, and portraying Dreyfus as the worst of all traitors is a plank in that process.

Céard's final line of attack, another reversal of Zola's attacks back onto the older man, is to direct his readers back to a study of 'J'Accuse...!', "au point de vue purement esthétique". Zola's defence had been keen to discredit the testimony of the handwriting experts who had declared Dreyfus to be the author of the *bordereau* at his trial. Many of the claims they produced at Zola's own trial had indeed served to put themselves into doubt, despite the ultimate sentence passed on the accused.[306] Céard turns scrutiny back onto Zola's own writing, at the stylistic rather than orthographical level, but in a similar spirit. "Les experts en analyse littéraire reconnaîtront qu'il ['J'Accuse...!'] est établi dans une forme essentiellement symétrique à la forme des articles ordinaires de M. Emile Zola ».

[306] See, for instance, Henri Mitterand's description of Alphonse Bertillon's farcical testimony: *Zola* v.III, pp. 421-3.

The counter-offensive attacks his opponent's strength, a form of swiftboating *avant la lettre*, as he discards the value of Zola's resonant, anaphoric series of 'J'accuse...', which closed his article. Céard points out that in articles attacking Arthur Ranc and Victorien Sardou, two authors well-favoured by the bourgeoisie at the time,[307] Zola had employed a similar technique of repeating a damning phrase through a portion of the article. In Sardou's case this was "l'obstinée répétition sonnant comme un écho d'un bout à l'autre d'un feuilleton : « Il n'a pas notre estime littéraire » ». Such an example was well-chosen to stir the *pathos* of Céard's readership, which would have had a predominantly positive notion of that same literary merit. Sardou had since 1878 been a member of the Académie Française, an institution which counted only one anti-Dreyfusard – Anatole France – among its members and which, to the average Parisian reader, was a bastion of literary distinction and political orthodoxy. Evoking Zola's attack article on Sardou thus allowed Céard implicitly to suggest that if he was so clearly wrong in his literary judgments, his faith in Dreyfus' innocence and good character could only be still more misguided.

Furthermore, the younger man opposes Zola's portraits of the key actors in the Affair, especially that of Du Paty de Clam, whom Zola famously (and erroneously) singled out as the chief instigator of the deceptions practiced in its course.[308] It has been pointed out that the rhetorical power of Zola's portrayal, showing Du Paty as a bleakly comic character with his head filled by mystery novel narratives and an addiction to mystification, was immense in January 1898. The average French citizen remained in profound ignorance of the relevant facts, and unacquainted with these personalities. Zola's description of Du Paty as an excessively literary figure dangerous to, and misplaced in, the ranks of the army was thus able to make a strong

[307] Ranc, by now a senator, had in fact become one of the few parliamentarians to favour Dreyfus' cause, making the allusion to Zola's past critiques especially piquant.
[308] See Alain Pagès, *Emile Zola, un Intellectuel dans l'Affaire Dreyfus*, pp.114, 123.

impression. By reviving the memory of Zola's previous literary portraits with which his readership were unlikely to concur, Céard was going some way to dispelling this impression, suggesting that Zola's measure of a man was formed from "intuition et d'après des ouï-dire".

In concluding, Céard restates the key difference between Zola's literary tracts and the Dreyfus intervention he sees as analogous to them – the vastly increased consequences of deception in the latter: "M. Emile Zola ne nous semble pas avoir prévu les consequences extra-littéraires de sa polémique". He ends on a frankly maudlin note, albeit another telling one as the spectre of "Gustave Flaubert, quittant sa table de travail pour aller faire l'exercice avec les gardes nationaux de Rouen, à l'heure où les Allemands menaçaient d'envahir la ville » is raised. Once more, Flaubert appears as the model Zola and every other litterateur should follow in judging society and deciding on their engagement with it. Céard claims to have "les larmes aux yeux" as he considers the contrast between his two literary elders. He thus employs a similar argument to that of Brunetière in his own 'Après le Procès', namely the specificity of competence in judgement. The slant with which this basic idea is presented is different in the two articles, however. While Brunetière would, as discussed in Chapter 2, propose a general conception of each domain's experts restricting themselves to opining on their own fields, Céard, as always, is primarily concerned with establishing the boundaries between literature and reality. Hence Flaubert's exemplum of a man of letters putting aside his writing in order to defend the national interest becomes the final thrust in his admirer's condemnation of Zola.

The very next day, Céard would put his name to another article on the Affair. Sarcastically titled 'Etres obtus', it was a response to Paul Alexis, the only contributor to *Les Soirées de Médan* who continued to support Zola through the events of 1898. Alexis had written an article in which he placed Céard on a list of "êtres obtus" whose nationalism was clouding

their perception of the Dreyfus case.[309] His erstwhile colleague responded vigorously with a defence of that same nationalism, for the first time invoking the 'intellectuels' as a target for his ire. The idea of the intellectual is presented as a fad, "où quiconque ne prend pas parti pour les faussaires et les voleurs de lettres de femmes est un "être obtus » ». Once again Céard suggests both that the Esterhazy letters were counterfeit, and that they were stolen from Mme. de Boulancy, without explaining how the two could be true at once. In fact Céard seems to be following Esterhazy's own claim (one of many on his part) that Dreyfus had obtained his handwriting in order to counterfeit him in writing the *bordereau*![310] In the course of the Affair, no hypothesis about the sensitive documents was too outlandish to be put forth. In any case, Céard is at pains to reverse the sense of "intellectual" and portray those claiming the label as, in truth, guided principally by sentiment in their allegiances. The persons in question have taken sides "sans savoir ce qu'elles disaient, et à propos de quel individu elles s'attendrissaient ». He also invokes his existing *ethos* as a man of letters in mocking the gaffe-prone Alexis' desire to paint Céard as an intellectual inferior: "il m'appelle "être obtus", opinion à laquelle je ne contredis point, M. Paul Alexis…étant, comme on sait, un grand clerc en la matière ».[311]

Céard restates his opposition to the Dreyfusards on the grounds of their claimed allegiance with foreign meddlers in France's affairs: "je protesterai toujours contre l'ingérence des étrangers dans la politique interne de la France". The « intellectuels » are now added to this group, forming a body who are « armés et en marche contre la patrie, ni plus ni moins que les Alliés de 1814 ». This opposition is dryly portrayed as « Affaire d'hérédité, que voulez-vous, Alexis ». The section that follows is close to Maurice Barrès' racially-motivated reflections on

[309] that text has not been chronicled, but Céard's direct references to it are unambiguous.
[310] Théodore Reinach, *Histoire Sommaire de l'Affaire Dreyfus*, (Paris: Librairie G. Bellais, 1904), p.94.
[311] Dismissing Alexis' intellect was standard fare in the republic of letters at the time – even Zola himself did so on occasion in correspondence.

the Affair. Its substance is that Alexis, just like Zola himself, comes from Aix-en-Provence and as such has an incomplete appreciation of threat posed by foreign invasion to France. Céard himself hails from "une antique famille de Champagne, la plus vielle province française, celle qui, en prose et en vers, a créé la langue que les « intellectuels » s'évertuent à détruire aujourd'hui ». He goes on to evoke the long stay in his region of both the Cossacks of 1814 and the Prussians of 1870. There is thus a blend of ethnic and historical arguments in his explanation of why a man from Champagne should have a truer grasp of the current crisis' political consequences. The above citation can only be read as an assertion that Southerners are 'less French' than Céard himself, having come later both to the French state and the French language itself: they are thus natural adherents of the intellectuals' party and do not muster the requisite concern for France's wellbeing to choose the right side in the Affair. Ironically, Céard alludes to the "coups de knout" his grandfather received from the invading uhlans in 1814, unwittingly invoking once more his ambiguous attitude to Esterhazy's correspondence.

This racial distinction is couched not just in historical terms but also, by extension, literary ones. The events that earlier generations of Champenois have lived through have made them "observateurs autant que naturalistes au monde, et si vous vous en doutez, relisez La Fontaine". Alexis and Zola, the last two naturalists left standing, are in fact unworthy of the name, their faculty of observation inadequate, possibly for ethnic reasons. Barrès is the most apt comparison with this article for his championing of regional instincts, but Brunetière is another possible comparison, although not for his position on race. The observation that La Fontaine was

a naturalist long before that term was first applied to literature is one Brunetière had advanced 15 years before in a Sorbonne address.[312]

Céard then leaves behind the regional question to assert that Zola's associates, such as Emile Duclaux and Anatole France, have failed him in offering any support to his position, particularly after the judgment. However, Zola himself is not so much to be pitied as his wife. Here Céard enlists his personal knowledge of the Zolas. His sympathy for Alexandrine Zola and the affective strain placed on her by Emile's affair, and 'seconde famille', with Jeanne Rozerot shows through. Céard rather maliciously seizes on the newspapers' noting "A côté de M. Emile Zola, Mme. Zola pleure!" in their court reports. He describes her as bearing "la peine d'un orgueil qu'elle n'a jamais eu et d'une faute qu'elle n'a jamais commise ». These transgressions are clearly not, for Céard, merely related to 'J'Accuse' and he comes close to breaking the code of silence that had surrounded Zola's second family over the preceding years.

The counteroffensive is well-chosen; Alexis was a frequent visitor to Jeanne, Denise and Jacques, one of the few social calls they received by virtue of their irregular situation. By dwelling on Alexandrine's tears, Céard challenges Alexis' claim to be a true friend to the Zolas, implicitly asserting that his own honour was greater in taking his distance from Emile after the birth of the latter's children. This argument was not persuasive to 'Mme. Zola' herself. Céard repeated many of his insinuations and commiserations in a personal letter to her during Zola's 1898-99 exile in London and, for his trouble, received the reply « vous pensez à mon amertume...comment alors n'avez-vous pas songé quelle douleur je devais encore plus éprouver en lisant vos articles? »[313] Yet this ultimately did not matter to Céard, who had long since fallen

[312] Brunetière, *Etudes Critiques sur l'Histoire de la Littérature Française,* v.1. (Paris: Hachette, 1916), pp.305-336. In the text, Brunetière ranges over a wide selection of 17th century works with an eye on passages that highlight the harmony between external and internal nature.
[313] cited in Mitterand, *Zola* v.III p.515.

away from friendship with the Zolas and whose real goal was to hint at their dirty laundry for his readers.

Honour, as a component of anti-Dreyfusard thought, is crucial in understanding the force of men like Céard's opposition to attacks against the army and the fatherland. His affected pity for Alexandrine Zola's tears joins his repeated references to the 'theft' of women's letters, and his claim of wanting "ni les larmes de la patrie, ni les larmes de cette femme là [Alexandrine]" when he chose his side in the Affair conjoins the questions of national security and chivalry towards women. A literary parallel here would be Alphonse Daudet's *Numa Roumestan*. Though Daudet was himself Provençal and celebrated the region in works such as *Lettres de mon Moulin*, the novel is a bitter critique of what Daudet sees as his fellow Southerners' unavoidable penchant for mendacity and dishonouring women. The title character is a successful son of Aps, become a minister through his skill in offering exaggerated promises and unquenchable bonhomie to those he frequents. Following his infidelity with a young actress, his Northern wife holds his political future in her hands – and, thanks to Daudet's penchant for sentimentality, chooses to forgive, and ends the novel giving birth to their first child as Numa kneels weeping at the bedside.

Leaving aside the hubris shown by Daudet in decrying his character's philandering when his wife Julia was one of the most pitied women in Paris in this regard, *Numa Roumestan* informs the claims of 'Etres Obtus' through its example of a strong critique of Southern men's honour. Zola, like Numa a man from Provence married to a long-suffering Northern wife, is portrayed by Céard as equally culpable in bringing dishonour on himself in the public arena, through excessive enthusiasm and a penchant for grand declarations he cannot back up with evidence or results. For those privy to the secret of Zola's domestic affairs, the comparison runs deeper. The validity of using *Numa Roumestan* to explain Céard's portrayal of Zola is supported

by the fact that he had already explicitly used another Daudet novel – *Fromont Jeune et Risler Aîné* – in writing 'A Bas la France'.

It can therefore be seen that Céard's allusion to Alexandrine Zola's tears, though apparently offhand and purely pathos-soaked, is in fact situated in a complex field of biographical, ideological and literary references. It highlights the importance of women and their treatment to the conception of honour Céard shared with other anti-Dreyfusards. His *Une Belle Journée* had already featured a female character, Ernestine Duhamain, of greater wisdom and sensitivity than the clumsy Trudon with whom she shared the page for much of the novel. Their creator accords her the Schopenhauer-inspired philosophical revelation on which the novel closes, underlining one of the significant differences between Céard's literary production and that of his idol Flaubert. Although Mme. Duhamain is no intellectual or moral paragon, her superiority to an Emma Bovary is noticeable and suggests that Céard's conception of honour was already present, at least in inchoate form, long before the Affair caused him to articulate it; the naturalist commonplace of torturing female characters is not to be found in his output.

Zola, as noted in Chapter 1, also used feminine traits in his rhetoric during the Affair, more abstractly, portraying Truth allegorically as a female figure in need of defence from anti-Dreyfusard attacks. The defence of women, then, was a topos employed by both sides to advocate the ethical superiority of their position in the Affair. Céard's existing sympathies led him to choose not merely a more concrete example of womanhood, but Alexandrine Zola herself, in order to continue the assault on Southern manhood launched in the first half of the article.

As the Affair went into a spring 1898 lull, following Zola's conviction and the successful attempt to dismiss that verdict on technical grounds, Céard fell silent on it. He would resume commenting when Zola's legal travails resumed, in early June of the same year, at just the point

when Zola would reprise his own writing about events. However, it was not the retrial at Versailles which drew Céard's attention, but the correspondingly-timed publication of an article on Zola's family history by Ernest Judet. On May the 23rd, the same day that the second trial began – and was immediately suspended after Labori pleaded the lack of the Versailles court's jurisdiction over alleged libels committed in Paris - Judet published an article in the newspaper he edited, *Le Petit Journal*. Its substance was the charge that Zola's father, François (born Francesco in Venice), had in fact been dishonourably discharged from the French Foreign Legion in 1831, rather than with the honours Emile had always assumed and declared him to have received.

Judet levelled an accusation of theft against the elder Zola, claiming to have a copy of a letter written by François' commanding officer detailing the man's offences and character flaws. The polemic involved far more than was at first clear and would not be fully resolved until after Dreyfus' pardon. It is now known that the incriminating documents Judet wielded were concocted by the same officer, Henry, responsible for the forged note used after the fact as corroboration of Dreyfus' own guilt. Although François Zola had indeed been guilty of financial tampering in Algiers in 1831, the theft appears to have been temporary (as much as a theft can be temporary) and motivated by his desire to help a married woman with whom he had become involved.[314] Upon investigation of the irregularities Zola offered to, and then did, make up the missing funds. Judet exaggerated both the nature of Zola's misdeeds and the intent behind them. Most saliently, he used the forged letters provided him by the War Ministry to assert that François Zola had left the army in disgrace, dishonoured in the eyes of his superiors and peers. The truth is that Zola was shown, in later life, favour and courtesy by many of the superior

[314] Pagès, *Emile Zola*, pp.227-33.

figures peripherally involved in the events of 1831, notably Louis-Philippe in his commissioning him to build the canal at Aix, and Marshal Soult with whom he corresponded.

The goal of Judet's (and, it turned out, the War Ministry's) story was of course further to damage Emile Zola's credibility as he once more defended his position in the Affair before a court. Zola responded immediately, suing Judet for libel the next day and going on to defend his father's reputation in the press.[315] However, Céard took Judet's claims at face value and, in a piece called 'Nouvel Oedipe' for *Le National*, pushed his literary interpretation of the Affair (or, in this case, its byproducts) further than ever. Seizing on the paternal nature of the allegations, he cast Zola as a modern-day Oedipus, whose relentless search for the truth he thinks will save his land is only bringing shame and horror on himself.

For Céard, this almost seems a boon. He begins by evoking the "affaire Zola" (there being no "affaire Dreyfus" in his eyes) and the weariness all of France now feels before it, due to its "esprit de réclame", "flagrante inutilité" and most of all "formidable ennui". Now, however, thanks to the publication of Judet's article, the matter is taking on "d'inquiètantes proportions d'humanité". The transition from social discourse to literary is swift in coming, as Céard declares that the case is assuming "les terribles allures d'une comédie grecque". For him this is the truly interesting part of the Affair; in a dismissive exclamation, all that has gone before is banished with the phrase "qu'importent maintenant les pamphlets et les poursuites, les séances infinies de la Cour d'Assises, à Paris, la séance avortée de la Cour d'Assises, à Versailles!".

In contrast, "ce qui devient singulièrement attachant, même pour les esprits sceptiques et les observateurs désintéressés, c'est que, par l'effet des polémiques et des circonstances, en nos temps modernes, M. Emile Zola en est arrivé à jouer à sa façon l'Œdipe-Roi de Sophocle ». If

[315] His defence became a sequence of four articles entitled 'Mon Père', which he would include at the end of *La Vérité en Marche*.

Céard had been asked to sum himself up in two phrases, he might well have replied « esprit sceptique » and « observateur désintéressé". He makes it clear that he thinks the whole Affair to be a vain attempt to subvert the national truth, and that the classical parallel opened by the new allegations against Zola's father is the only point of interest it has left to offer. As has been illustrated, this literary predilection had not prevented him from holding and expressing genuinely political opinions in the preceding months. However, 'Nouvel Oedipe' does indeed leave aside direct discussion of the Affair, in order allegorically to twist the knife into the still-raw wound in Zola's spirit opened by Judet.

There follows a summary of Sophocles' plot, in which Céard's presentation focuses on Oedipus' fixation with the truth as the cause of his downfall. Céard was not alone in critiquing Zola's polemical use of "la vérité en marche" during the Affair, and in taking every opportunity to subvert that use. Léon Bloy, the hyperbolic pamphleteer, in his belated work *Je m'Accuse* savaging 'Le Crétin', as he termed Zola, was considerably less nuanced than Céard on the matter: "Zola s'est foutu de la Vérité et de la Justice, dont il osa polluer les vocables de sa main merdeuse".[316] Here, Céard says of Oedipus that "la vérité, à laquelle il s'appliquait de toutes ses forces, lui apparaît enfin dans sa triomphante hideur ». His reckless pursuit of truth has made it so that « un peuple est condamné à la détresse et promis à l'agonie". The national interest and the jeopardy in which Zola has placed it return under Céard's pen.

Céard accepts Judet's claims, while distancing himself from the question of how their proof was obtained ("nous laissons [to Zola's adversaries], faute de moyen de contrôle, toute la responsabilité de leur révélation"), as one would hope given his previous declarations on the theft of letters. He points to Zola's inability to refute the new accusations, and highlights the helpless "que faire?" that features near the end of the older man's article responding to them. All

[316] Léon Bloy, *Je M'Accuse* (Paris: Ed. de la 'Maison d'Art', 1900), p.6.

these strands weave together to create the image Céard wishes to promote, that of Zola as a man struck down by destiny. Ironically, he sees the "que faire?" as justified, since "comment croire que même les pires ennemis auraient eu cette invention extra-humaine de créer des salissures à un mort pour la pénible satisfaction de déshonorer son fils ? » The presentation of such an act as beyond the scope of human infamy was thoroughly misplaced.

However, given the chance to revisit the Judet controversy almost two years later, when Judet's countersuit against Zola was finally dismissed and the latter presented the results of his research into his father's past, Céard did not revise his initial conception of events. Instead, he published (in *L'Evénement*) an almost identical article with a slightly different title, 'Oedipe Moderne'. In it, he repeated the absurdity of believing that Zola's adversaries would have falsified such documents, and asserted that, when Zola was eventually allowed to consult the 'proof' himself, he was forced to acknowledge its validity. By doing so, Céard entirely obfuscated the history of Henry's forgeries and (on their discovery) suicide, all facts that had long become public knowledge by the time he came to rewrite the 'Oedipe' article. However such a partial treatment of the facts is not isolated. After his suicide a public subscription to build a monument to Henry was launched, attracting thousands of signatures backed by often vitriolic notes: Paul Valéry would be one of the contributors.[317]

To return to the 1898 article, Céard once more offers Flaubert as a counter-model to Zola's actions. Whereas he had before been used in 'Après le Procès' as a man of action, forsaking his writing in favour of military exercises as the Prussians advanced on Rouen, here he appears as a moralist. Céard quotes Flaubert as saying that "l'homme de lettres qui cesse de s'occuper de littérature, déchoit et ne tarde pas à être puni ». This, of course, is precisely what Zola has done by enmeshing himself in the Affair, and Judet is implicitly cast as the divine

[317] Alan B. Spitzer, *Historical Truth and Lies about the Past* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1996), p.52.

punishment that accompanies Zola's fall from the grace of literature. The new developments are presented almost as a logical consequence of Flaubert's views: "ainsi, parce que M. Emile Zola s'est éloigné de son travail de romancier…ses œuvres…son caractère…son talent, son nom, tout risque d'être effacé par une poignée de ptomaïnes ramassées dans un cercueil ouvert à grands coups de scandale ! ». For those as baffled by the meaning of 'ptomaïnes' as this reader initially was, it is defined as "toute substance aminée toxique formée au cours de la putréfaction des protéines animales sous l'effet de microorganismes"[318]; Céard delves back into his medical past to colour the metaphors of his article, thereby presenting a sad, obscure counterpoint to Zola's own past uses of medical analogy to support his literary procedures.

Defending female honour returns as a theme. Céard places Zola in an analogous position to that of "Mme Esterhazy, quand, vraies ou fausses, on lui fit brutalement connaître, par la voie de la presse, les lettres dont s'est défendu son mari. » Zola is being punished, then, not only for his heresy against Flaubert's precepts, but for his lack of chivalry both before the Affair and during it. Céard's satisfaction at this *retournement de situation* is evident as he supplies a maxim of his own: "la tactique, souvent, a contre les tacticiens de sévères et d'implacables revanches". He ends by likening Zola no longer to Oedipus, but to Christ as he protested the depth of his pain on Calvary.

'Nouvel OEdipe' emerges as the clearest example of Céard's interpreting the Affair through literary exempla. He structures the entire article around the parallels between Zola's current situation and the Oedipus myth, revealing the depth of his faith not only in the military institutions of France but also in Flaubert's aesthetics as they translate to ethical principles. The willing conflation of Greek *nemesis* (a concept to which would return when Zola threatened

[318] Source: http://atilf.atilf.fr/dendien/scripts/tlfiv5/visusel.exe?12;s=986004420;r=1;nat=;sol=1;. Retrieved 09/23/12.

France with it, the following September) and the operations of the War Ministry, coupled with the refusal to discuss the truth of Esterhazy's letters, are the ultimate evidence that Céard's proclaimed scepticism applied only to the documents advanced by the Dreyfusards in this period.

By the end of 1898 the Affair had developed from a legal controversy to one on which the future direction of the French state hung. The events of the summer had both exposed many of the previously secret facts of the Dreyfus case, and hardened the ideological divide between Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards. After Henry, in late August, was discovered to have forged the document initially revealed by then-War Minister Cavaignac to the Chamber of Deputies as the proof of Dreyfus' guilt, public opinion in favour of the revision of the artillery officer's trial grew. However, a majority of the country remained anti-Dreyfusard, and President Félix Faure was among those working against revision.[319] As previously noted, even Henry's suicide was, in some quarters, taken not as an admission of guilt but as the last patriotic act of an honourable man.

Yet with the growing indications of inconsistency and fabrication in the body of evidence used to convict Dreyfus and continue to affirm his guilt, key political figures saw opportunities for gain in criticizing the government's opposition to reopening the case. Jaurès, who had initially been reluctant to declare his support of a retrial, began to pressure the cabinet (or cabinets, as individual governments began to succeed each other). Georges Clemenceau had been doing so all along, as a member of the editorial team of *L'Aurore* and the man who found the

[319] Cahm, *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, p. 128. Nevertheless, the upsurge in support for revision of the Dreyfus case was enormous the minute Henry's deeds were made public: Cahm affirms that "la presse révisionniste passa de 2 à 40%" (p.154).

title of Zola's 'J'Accuse' for him.[320] The latter half of 1898 was a realigning period, in which the Dreyfusard and anti-Dreyfusard sides in the Chamber more clearly became synonymous with the political left and right respectively. Previously, many socialist groups had been reluctant to take a side in the Affair, for two principal reasons: one, that it was commonly viewed as an internal bourgeois conflict in which the proletariat should not get involved, and two, traditional far-left anti-Semitism motivated by the association of Jews with international capital and exploitation of the working class.[321]

These political shifts only served further to alarm mainstream opinion, and the customary internationalism of the far-left now being enrolled in favour of Dreyfus confirmed many French citizens of a nationalist bent in their view that further public scrutiny of the Dreyfus case would threaten the country's integrity. Among those with intellectual standing, the further imperative was to oppose the substantial displays of support for Dreyfus and Zola (who by now was halfway through his period of exile in south-east England) coming from the Quartier Latin and the republic of letters. Equally, the foundation of the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (LDH) in June 1898 had had a mobilizing effect in Dreyfusard circles, and their opponents saw the benefit of reacting with a similar league on the right.

It was in this context that the Ligue de la Patrie Française (LPF) was created, in January 1899. With prominent literary critic, and member of the Académie Française, Jules Lemaître as its key advocate, the LPF provided a rallying-point for intellectuals on the right. Although Lemaître was the most active member of the LPF in promoting it through speeches given around the country, its foremost ideologue was Maurice Barrès. Barrès, a former Boulangist deputy and

[320] Mitterand, *Zola* v.III, pp.378-9.
[321] Cahm, pp. 128-9. He cites a CGT brochure of Spring 1898 that avowed: "Nous, Travailleurs, les éternels exploités, nous n'avons pas à prendre parti dans ce conflit entre Juifs et Chrétiens! Les uns et les autres se valent, puisqu'ils nous dominent et nous exploitent".

"prince de la jeunesse" of the Quartier Latin, one of the most prominent young litterateurs and political thinkers of his time, proposed a nationalist ideology towards which his thought had moved over the course of the 1890s. Before the Affair principally associated with populism, Barrès was both a symptom of, and a mover in, the realigning of anti-Dreyfusism with the political right.

Barrès' organicist conception of the French nation began in the period of the Affair to be incarnated in the doctrine of "la terre et les morts", stressing the *de facto* historical foundation of France in opposition to the rationalist universal notion, siting the locus of France and Frenchness in a set of abstract principles, that had been promulgated by the Revolution and sustained in subsequent republican discourse. For Barrès, the individual (who counted for nothing in the final analysis) found his or her initial attachment to the nation at the most local level, with the regions of France combining to form the overall national polity. As Zeev Sternhell puts it, "Barrès pense en effet que seule une société qui maintiendrait 'les petites patries', celles où 'l'homme se sent soutenu par la terre, par les moeurs, par les sympathies et où il se peut épanouir pleinement', serait capable de s'attaquer aux problèmes posés par la société moderne".[322] Revanchism was thus a natural outgrowth of such a vision, with Alsace and Lorraine remaining French by natural and historical right despite the German annexation. Although the LPF was far from being a coordinated mouthpiece for Barrès' political theories (Brunetière, although also a prominent anti-Dreyfusard and initial member, was fundamentally opposed to Barrès on many ideological points and soon left the LPF),[323] his personal magnetism and the force of his nationalist convictions were responsible for the adhesion of many of its members.

[322] Sternhell, *Maurice Barrès et le Nationalisme Français*, p.325.
[323] Compagnon, *Connaissez-Vous Brunetière?*, pp.176-87.

It is clear from the foregoing analysis that many aspects of Barrès' doctrine would be naturally appealing to Céard – the regionalist and historical focus on questions of French identity, and the need for military strength to face the power of Germany, in particular – and so it proved, with the Champenois an early adherent to, and advocate of, the Ligue. As early as the 7th of January 1899, just days after its founding, Céard put his name to the article 'La Patrie Française', in *L'Evénement*. Whereas many of Céard's previous Dreyfus articles had been either playful in tone or literary in their construction (or both), 'La Patrie Française' opens in descriptive mode, with Céard's adjectivally-loaded opinions welded to a series of statements resuming the initial activity of the Ligue. He evokes "le malheur des temps particulièrement bouleversés que nous traversons" which have needed the creation of a league to defend national interests that, for Céard, should be automatically the concern of every citizen.

He returns to the notion of specific competence by stressing that "ses adhérents ont résolu de travailler dans les limites de leur devoir professionnel, à maintenir, en conciliant avec le progrès des idées et des mœurs, les traditions de la Patrie française ». Unlike Dreyfusard intellectuals, Céard and his colleagues affected a belief in the limitation of individual action to the fields of which that individual had special, professional knowledge. For many it is unclear to what extent this prescription rested on a pre-existing conviction, and how far it was motivated by the tactic of opposing Zola's intervention, as a well-known writer, into public legal discourse on the Affair. In Céard's case, however, the longstanding nature of his literary and, by extension, ethical attachment to Flaubert places the stance in conformity with a more general outlook. Emerging from his professional perspective, then, was a set of beliefs predisposing Céard to an attachment to the LPF. The organization's members are "persuadés qu'ils expriment l'opinion de la France", and this is a relatively accurate reflection of public opinion in January 1899, although

as Céard himself observes the turbulence of that opinion had become such that no one stance could truly claim to represent it.

The journalist then begins to couch his explanations more frequently in moral terms, speaking of the "nobles intelligences" joining the LPF, and the over 600 "personnages considérables", all of whom are "émus" enough to add their "noms respectés" and "courageux concours" to its roster. The motivation for this activity is "la plus funeste des agitations", underlining the mainstream conservative nature of the LPF's position, in contrast to other leagues opposing Dreyfus such as the street agitator Jules Guérin's Ligue Antisémitique: the preservation of order is the primary cause of the group's formation. The elogious judgements Céard confers on his new colleagues reflect another staple of conservatism; the faith in status and existing institutions as a reflection of the national interest. It contrasts with the recurrent use of such terms as "violemment" by Céard in describing Zola's engagement. Céard goes on to allude to an opposition to republican ideals he shared with Barrès, although for more pragmatic reasons: "a la faveur des droits de l'Homme que les jacobins respectèrent fort mal, puisque toutes [sic] leur déférence se borna à la manœuvre de la guillotine, on finissait par oublier, les droits de ces milliers d'hommes réunis sous un drapeau commun, et dont l'ensemble constitue la France ».[324] He thus critiques not only the LDH itself, but the republican ideological foundation on which it rests, from the perspective of the gap between ideals and their application.

Thus, "par la vertu d'antiques définitions, les esprits égarés ont été facilement rappelés à la notion de ce qu'est la Patrie". Weight of opinion and national tradition supersede the principles marshalled by the Dreyfusards – principles, Céard has argued elsewhere, to which

[324] This does not mean that Barrès was against the Republic as a form of government for France, in the manner of the royalist Charles Maurras. The former's opposition was to the secular, centralized and rationalized ideals of 1789, which were in conflict with his "la terre et les morts". Céard's position on the Republic as French body politic is not known.

their actions do not match up in any case. Since "personne n'osait émettre le paradoxe de supprimer l'armée", it must be respected and its morale maintained, free from insults and suspicion, being "notre meilleure garantie contre les menaces de l'étranger, fort intéressé à nous diviser pour mieux nous envahir un jour". The foreign threat is paramount; Céard thus offers a more particular version of Brunetière's pro-military argument in his 'Après le Procès', that the army is necessary for the preservation of the nation. Céard's attitude towards democracy itself is hard to determine – he does not address the concept directly. The above allusion to the "milliers d'hommes" who constitute the true France is not enough to show that Céard followed Barrès in advocating direct democracy over the liberal, parliamentary form represented by the Third Republic. For Barrès, popular referenda were in many cases preferable to the parliamentary process.[325] However, the critiques of the Jacobins also present in 'La Patrie Française' do imply a distrust of republican elites that would suggest that direction in Céard's thought.

He now asks whether "la Ligue de la Patrie française va s'en tenir à des manifestations platoniques, et si, devant l'effort des astuces cosmopolites, elle se contentera d'actes de foi plus ou moins bravement rédigés ». Action is preferable to declarations, with the cosmopolitan threat insuperable by words alone. "Cosmopolite" is a term that, at the time, would have brought to most readers' minds Paul Bourget's novel *Cosmopolis* and the high society depicted there. In one adjective Céard thus activates a network of meanings which serve to advance his distinction between the patriotism and Frenchness of the LPF and its members, and the dangerous internationalism he sees in the Dreyfusard camp. In *Cosmopolis*, the international set resident in Rome are depicted, with their frivolity and conventions ultimately unimportant in the face of the racially-grounded characteristics they exhibit. Bourget was anti-Dreyfusard, albeit in private.[326]

[325] Sternhell, *Maurice Barrès*, pp.325-27.
[326] Ruth Harris, *Dreyfus*, p.483.

By evoking his peer's text, Céard can thus make a double argument; that the Dreyfusards and their international 'allies' are as morally bankrupt as many of the characters of *Cosmopolis*, and that their racial alterity (whether it be Zola's or Dreyfus' himself) makes their ideology unreliable.

To this literary reference Céard adds an older, citing Racine's maxim that "la foi qui n'agit pas n'est pas une foi sincère". Thus the LPF will pursue "un programme de réformes" founded on "un tracé de conduite philosophique et gouvernementale". This conjunction is worthy of note, as it indicates Céard's move from the populist, authoritarian tone maintained thus far in the article to a discussion of the counter-ideology the LPF will present. In the course of this shift he affirms that "les droits de la France" are "supérieurs aux droits d'un individu". Although seemingly unremarkable and natural in the context in which it occurs, the statement is in fact a sharp break with Céard's position on Dreyfus' culpability to date. He had previously maintained an avowed belief in that guilt, focusing on the supposed falsifications and distortions of the Dreyfusards' attempts to exonerate the prisoner. Here, the other common argument on the anti-Dreyfusard side – that, even if Dreyfus were innocent, the French interest precluded undermining the army by reopening his case – is substituted for Céard's earlier position.

There follows an encomium of Lemaître, one logically fraught since Céard argues that the critic's inexperience in political discourse is a virtue: "[il] apporte dans l'examen des questions sociales une grande vigueur de néophyte et d'apôtre". This characterization is at odds with Céard previous declarations on the necessity of intellectuals restricting themselves to their existing fields of expertise. It also harks back to Brunetière's approval of the Daudet novel *L'Evangéliste*, where he claimed that the author's carefree writing style only strengthened its power as a 'bonne action'.

Lemaître was keen to emphasize the absence of any "esprit d'exclusivisme" as the LPF coalesced, and Céard quotes him saying that "nous n'avons point des âmes de proscripteurs". Both Céard and Lemaître show their awareness of the multiplicity of interests and opinions present in "la foule des signataires", as Céard terms it, and indeed this would prove to be a crippling factor in the Ligue's inability to sustain its initial momentum. The more positive goal in this stress on the LPF's inclusivity is to contrast it with the violence and disruption Céard has associated with Zola and the other Dreyfusards' activity since the beginning of his reflections on the Affair. He thus foregrounds the adhesions of José Maria de Hérédia and François Coppée, useful examples for him as an anti-Dreyfusard man of letters.

Hérédia and Coppée served, in Céard's presentation, to counterbalance the capital of literary prestige accrued on the Dreyfusard side by Zola, France, Octave Mirbeau, Lucien Descaves and other writers who had been active in supporting revision of the case. These are further described as "citoyens passionnés, artisans de systèmes, ou provocateurs de troubles". As always, « passion » is negatively connoted in Céard's thought, contrasted with the stolidity of the "simples et bonnes gens" now joining the LPF. Again the critique of republicanism appears in the new splicing of passion to the substantive "citoyens", and the falsely abstract nature of their thought in the scorn heaped on "artisans de systèmes".

In response to these systems of thought, Céard champions "le scepticisme qui se révolte". This scepticism, however, is not of a de-contextualized Pyrrhonian form. It takes on an ethnic tone, since "sceptique oui, il l'était demeuré, le vieux peuple français…au vrai sens supérieur et indulgent du mot ». However, this very indulgence has allowed foreign ideas and races to profit « de son ironie pour créer contre lui des moyens nouveaux de servitude et d'oppression". For Céard, then, scepticism is a moral attitude first and foremost, but one in need of vigorous defence

in order to preserve it from exploitation coming from abroad. The idea of a French scepticism takes its place alongside Barrès' notion of a French truth;[327] it adds to the picture of an anti-Dreyfusard nationalist epistemology, in which categories traditionally considered universal and a-contextual, like truth and scepticism, become particularized into French variants.

Hence the importance of "la Patrie" as a constant which can preserve the French spirit from undermining by the various coteries he sees as currently doing that work. He presents the factions negatively, advocating at the article's close for "la liberté pour quiconque n'étant ni catholique, ni protestant, ni juif, ni franc-maçon, reste respectueux de tout et insoumis quand même, vous et moi, n'est-ce pas, lecteurs de *L'Evénement* ? ».

One can assume that, despite the apparent impartiality shown by including Catholicism in the list, Céard's true ire is directed at the three groups following it. With the substitution of "métèques" for "catholiques", the list would overlap with Charles Maurras' "quatre états confédérés", the groups he similarly accused of bringing down France from within. In Céard's own case his views on foreigners make such a substitution quite plausible. To Brunetière and Barrès, the parallels between Céard's beliefs and those of Maurras can now be added. It thus becomes clear how plural the facets of Céard's anti-Dreyfusism are. Behind the literary devices and allusions, mixed with psychological analysis, used to interpret the many developments of the Affair are a set of right-wing principles placing him firmly in the centre ground of the anti-Dreyfusard spectrum. Although overt racism directed at Jews was absent from his writings, fear of and accusations against foreigners and their ideas were a staple, and in 'La Patrie Française' in particular emerges a distrust of parliamentary republicanism and its ideals that Céard shared with many leading anti-Dreyfusard thinkers in early 1899.

---

[327] Spitzer, *Historical Truth and Lies about the Past,* p.56. Barrès elaborated this notion in his novel *Les Déracinés* (1897), by opposition to the universalist Kantian moral imperative popular among republican philosophy professors.

Céard would not produce his next, and last major, article on the Affair until that September. Thereafter he returned to it only to produce the 'Oedipe Moderne' article, more accurately a retread, discussed above. In a piece named 'Némésis', however, Céard responded to Zola's outraged 'Le Cinquième Acte', itself a response to the second conviction of Dreyfus at his retrial in Rennes. There, Zola expressed his disbelief at the verdict, a disbelief shared by many on the Dreyfusard side, and warned France that Nemesis would figuratively punish her transgressions against justice.

Céard's retort was bitterly sarcastic: he begins by saying that "a propos de l'affaire Dreyfus, laquelle a ceci de commun avec les serpents que plus on la coupe, plus elle remue, je demande la permission de parler seulement de littérature ». He thus accentuates the originality of his interpretation of events, a constant throughout his articles of the previous two years. It firms up the idea of literature as a refuge from the grind of the Affair, already present in 'La Ville d'Alceste' as a model, and in 'A Bas la France' as a distraction from the courtroom ennui.

The Champenois then explains that Zola's article invites such an angle, flippantly calling him "mon maître" and mock-humbly suggesting that "à son opinion, que je respecte, j'opposerai mon opinion qui, pour venir de moins haut, n'est peut-être pas tout-à-fait méprisable". Zola's pride, accentuated in this depiction, is a close cousin of the pernicious passion previously highlighted in him by Céard's journalism. The younger man recalls the "temps lointain et dont je parais être seul à me souvenir » when Zola « proclamait que rien n'existait, sauf la littérature ». Unsurprisingly Céard professes his faith in this erstwhile doctrine of Zola's. Whether this is a fair reflection of Zola's past views on the role of the man of letters is a complex question. It is true that the author of *Germinal* had rejected suggestions made to him to pursue a parliamentary career, and that after 1881 he had largely withdrawn even from journalism in favour of his

novels. However, he had also frequented politicians such as Gambetta, and in writing such articles as 'La République et la Littérature' had persistently placed literature in relation with its political environment. Céard's attribution of such an attitude, then, has a strong hint of straw man about it.

While this set-up might lead the reader to expect another unflattering comparison of Zola with Flaubert, or a blanket rejection of the concept of intellectual engagement Zola had exemplified since December 1897, Céard's line of argument quickly proves to be narrower. Although he does discuss the "violence" of Zola's actions on behalf of Dreyfus, his primary concern is to assert of the latter that "la plus grande vertu de cet officier est précisément de manquer de littérature". The contrast between Zola's defence of Dreyfus and his lack of vigour in helping Louis Desprez 15 years before retains Céard's attention.

Since Desprez's case would already have been unfamiliar to most 1899 readers, (and is still more so today) Céard recalls its outline. He paints Desprez, the novelist convicted of obscenity for his co-authored 1884 novel *Autour d'un Clocher* and who would die shortly thereafter of tuberculosis exacerbated by his brief prison sentence, as a young idealist seduced by the "exagérations des livres de Zola". Céard affects surprise at Desprez's naivety since, like Céard himself, the young naturalist hailed from the "sceptique province" of Champagne. *Autour d'un Clocher* inflamed the guardians of morality with its depiction of the forbidden affair between a country priest and the young schoolmistress sent to teach in his village. Céard maintains a balanced tone in acknowledging that "le livre incriminé, vocabulaire à part, reste comme un excellent tableau des mœurs de la campagne". He then suggests that that vocabulary, and the novel's composition overall, were fundamentally equivalent to those of Zola, meaning that the legal pursuit of Desprez created an injustice: "tandis que Zola demeurait indemne,

Desprez…fut condamné pour avoir employé les mêmes procédés et les mêmes expressions où triomphait son maître ».

This, Céard claims, provided an opportunity to denounce the injustice and to show the French public Desprez's blamelessness in writing *Autour d'un Clocher*. Not only this, but Zola could equally have taken the opportunity to "défendre publiquement les droits de la littérature et de protester contre un verdict tout à fait contraire à la liberté du roman et de la pensée. Il n'en fit rien cependant ». These two failures are immense for Céard; the lack of loyalty to a brother in literature and to his literary principles themselves provide a damning counter-precedent for Zola's Dreyfus Affair interventions. He acknowledges that the older man did intervene to reduce Desprez's sentence and visit him in prison, and although raising the fact of Desprez's death avoids any claim that his blood was on Zola's hands.

Instead, the second betrayal, of literature itself, is singled out as the greater. This "droit des lettres, droit supérieur, droit qu'il professait, et pour le compte duquel, moins enthousiaste que pour le triomphe de Dreyfus, il ne s'avisa jamais de donner « sa liberté et son sang » » is the ideal, along with « la Patrie », Céard has himself been opposing to the reality of Zola's actions throughout his articles on the Affair. Zola's new offer of his liberty and blood for Dreyfus is contrasted with his rejection, almost 20 years earlier, of « le sang » as a valid means of proof. Pointing out the contradictions of Zola's discourse (in this case, unlike his outburst during the libel trial, at a long interval) is a continuing theme for Céard.

He then moves to the claimed absurdity of Zola's attempt to claim high literary merit for Dreyfus' notes and letters from exile.[328] This project is "une honte nouvelle", claims Céard, Dreyfus being no more than a "triste esprit". But the fault is not to be deduced on a moral or

[328] Dreyfus' memoirs, *Cinq Années de ma Vie*, were published in 1901. Letters he had written in exile were being reproduced in the Dreyfusard press in order to try and stir public sympathy for his plight as the retrial took place.

intellectual basis; in his last original reflections on the Affair, Céard returns to the literary-historical approach that had structured his first, 'Virtuosité Littéraire'. He argues for the irony of the "révolutionnaire" Zola's return to the practices of an earlier time, in which prominent criminals frequently turned their hand to literature.

The two examples he offers are those of Marie Lafarge and Pierre François Lacenaire. Both cases gripped France in the first half of the 19th century. The former was convicted of poisoning her husband in the town of Tulle, in 1840. Lafarge was a wealthy woman of illegitimate Orléans descent through her mother, one of the reasons for which the case garnered such publicity under the July monarchy. Lacenaire, for his part, had been guillotined four years earlier for a series of murders; after his arrest he courted the press and public and made his trial an event in the social calendar.[329] These "gredins exaltés", says Céard, "travaillèrent à se mettre à la hauteur des illusions de leurs défenseurs ». Dreyfus lacks even their slight literary merit, since while « Lacenaire écrivit des vers et Mme Lafarge rédigea des mémoires », the Jewish captain can offer only letters. Céard goes on to allege a conspiracy in the construction of Dreyfus as a literary figure, singling out the Collège de France classicist and Dreyfusard intellectual Louis Havet. The latter "soutint cette thèse hardie, que ses connaissances en latin (et quel latin!) lui permettaient d'affirmer la pureté grammaticale des lettres du condamné ». Yet, according to Céard, « quand on relit ces lettres, on reste stupéfait de leur médiocrité d'esprit et de l'infériorité intellectuelle manifeste dont elles témoignent chez leur auteur ».

This is probably the closest Céard comes to anti-Semitism in his 10 articles on the Affair. The categorical statement of Dreyfus' intellectual inferiority could lead one to believe Céard is locating its aetiology in the officer's Jewishness. In either case, he expresses his astonishment

[329] For Lacenaire, see his *Mémoires et autres écrits*, Ed.Jacques Simonelli (Paris: José Corti), 1991. For Lafarge, see Gérard Robin, *L'affaire Lafarge*, (Paris: De Vecchi, 2006).

not that Dreyfus might have been a traitor, but that such a limited personage could ever have held a commission in the French army and been, "même comme stagiaire, dans un corps d'état-major". From here Céard returns to the argument first advanced in the 'Lettre à Zola', that he himself is better able to use Zola's method of the 'document humain' than his peer. "Et c'est là l'explication que M. Emile Zola ne voit pas ou s'efforce de ne pas voir. C'est que son client fut à la fois victime de sa sottise et de sa vanité. Il n'a pas menti, le jour où il a dit au capitaine Lebrun Renaud : « Si j'ai livré des documents, c'était pour en avoir d'autres. » »

Céard thus repeats the myth of Dreyfus' confession, even though the Affair was at an advanced stage and the untruth of this rumour had been shown beyond a reasonable doubt. Although Lebrun-Renault[330] had recently repeated his claim that Dreyfus avowed his crime to him as Lebrun led the prisoner to the Ecole Militaire for his degradation, in January 1895, others such as the former president Casimir-Périer had denied him having told them of it at the time, in Casimir-Périer's case on the witness stand in Rennes.[331] It was thus extremely tendentious for Céard to assert the confession as a known fact.

From this assertion the journalist goes on to extend his psychological analysis of Dreyfus and his actions with insights taken from his own life. "Quiconque a vécu dans les administrations, sait que, par tous les moyens, certains individus essaient d'étonner leurs collègues et leurs chefs par des travaux et perspicacités extraordinaires. On n'imagine pas à quelles sottises, à quels crimes même pousse le goût de l'avancement et le désir d'être remarqué ». The use of « sottise » here renews the presence of Flaubert in the text, and calls to mind an implicit comparison of Dreyfus with the bumbling Bouvard and Pécuchet. Zola had

[330] as the Affair's first major historian, Joseph Reinach, wrote his name and as he has generally been known in its subsequent histories.
[331] Cahm, *L'Affaire Dreyfus*, p.210.

never been a bureaucrat, unlike Céard, Huysmans and Maupassant, all of whom had held middle-ranking positions in various ministries to supplement their literary revenues.[332]

This is a new dimension of Céard's claim to more accurate knowledge than Zola held; he analyzes Dreyfus as a "document humain" whose like he has been able to observe many times during his career as a civil servant. Thus a slippage can be observed within Céard's Dreyfus-era articles themselves, with the frequently-affirmed suspension of doubt on the facts of the case itself, seen so often in the earlier texts, now replaced not only by specific claims, but (in many cases) ones that had been widely discredited. Ironically, as the initially cloudy waters of the case slowly cleared due to the scrutiny Zola, Clemenceau and others had fomented, Céard's belief in, or at least championing of, the false evidence generally accepted at its outset intensified.

Céard thus constructs a narrative of Dreyfus' motivations in the Affair that appears to reach back to Balzac's *Les Employés* for its validity: "Etant stupide, il voulut passer pour malin. Croyant amorcer, il fut pris à l'hameçon qu'il avait tendu…". Yet this portrait serves a definite goal under Céard's pen; to legitimate the controversial judgement of the Rennes court-martial, convicting Dreyfus once more but with a reference to extenuating circumstances. Céard offers his analysis of Dreyfus' character as "le secret de ce jugement de Rennes qui admet les circonstances atténuantes. Les documents ont été livrés, certes, mais avec une bêtise si touchante que les juges en sont demeurés apitoyé, et quand M. Emile Zola monte dans la chaire des israélites, des protestants et des franc-maçons, pour plaider les droits de l'humanité…il ne s'aperçoit pas que…les juges ont fait, mieux que lui, une œuvre de justice et de lumière ».

'Némésis', then, functions as a microcosmic summary of the salient Céardian concerns in discussing the Dreyfus Affair. It encapsulates within its two columns the wider movement in its

[332] Colin, *Zola, Renégats et Alliés*, pp.23-4. Maupassant worked at the Navy Ministry before being able to live from his pen, while Huysmans worked at the Interior Ministry his whole career and Céard worked at the War Ministry before finishing his career at the Musée Carnavalet.

author's thought from literature to politics; while the article had begun with a discussion of Dreyfus' lack of ability as a writer, it moves in an associative sequence to consideration of the captain's intellect as a whole, then to his actions in the general staff, and finally to Zola's claimed subservience to Jews, Protestants and Freemasons in his apologetics of Dreyfus. With the addition of the *métèques* Zola himself has already been insinuated as representing in Céard's earlier articles, the Champenois now finds himself perfectly aligned with Maurras and his sympathizers in positing the Dreyfus Affair as the latest act in a long-running conspiracy against France by the "quatre états confédérés". Thus not only do Céard's musings on the Affair rely less and less on the veil of literary analysis, they also display a growing strain of racial and religious bias as their politics become more clearly stated. The pretence at impartiality in 'La Patrie Française', where Catholics were added to the list of constituencies mentioned, is entirely absent here.

Céard closes by shifting the focus of his attack back from Dreyfus to Zola. He rejects the latter's allusion to the shame that will fall on France if the right resolution is not brought to the Affair before the upcoming General Exposition in Paris. The event will merely provide a forum where "les étrangers viendront boire notre vin et embrasser nos servantes", and it is therefore not worth extraordinary measures to save. As before, Céard draws on his extensive knowledge of Zola's earlier writings, of all forms, to note that Zola had made similar claims about the Exposition of 1867, both in *La Curée* and the *La Cloche* newspaper when he edited it.[333] This recycling of material is used as an indication that Zola's support for Dreyfus is as flawed literarily as it is epistemologically and politically: "la cause que M. Emile Zola croit servir n'implique pas nécessairement l'usage des poncifs et des termes démodés. Dans le but de réhabiliter Dreyfus, il n'est pas indispensable de rompre avec toutes ses théories littéraires et

[333] In truth, Zola had been a critic for *La Cloche*, uninvolved in its editorial process.

d'aller reprendre les expressions les plus usées et les plus dénuées de sens des lexiques scolaires ».

The article's coda thus reverses the trend it had formerly displayed, from literature to politics, to bring Céard's reading of the Affair back to the author's professional domain. The failure, as Céard sees it, of Zola's intervention in the events of the past couple of years serves also as a benchmark of the failure of naturalism itself as a literary aesthetic. Whereas earlier articles had used the flaws claimed to be inherent in the naturalist method to reject Zola's reasoning in the Affair, here the demonstration travels in the opposite direction. This testifies to how intertwined the questions of naturalism and Dreyfus were in Céard's mind.

"Ce naturalisme, qui nous promettait une littérature inspirée de la science, et, comme la science, parlant une langue de justesse et de précision…s'en va, ainsi qu'un mendiant, chercher des comparaisons parmi le vétuste de la mythologie ». These questions of style are not superficial, says Céard, because the choice of style reflects an intellectual commitment either to the limpidity of scientific discourse or to the outdated tropes of classical literature. This is "le beau progrès, pour ne pas dire la belle farce!". Implicit here is an *ad hominem* critique of Zola as someone who has fallen into mental decline and whose mind is now slipping into the degeneracy represented by a return to mythology. Zola's flight to England also permits the image of naturalism itself wandering "ainsi qu'un mendiant", shorn of its earlier purpose. The younger man ends his analysis of the Affair by warning Dreyfus not to visit Céard's newly-adopted hometown of Port-Haliguen (home to a boat named 'Némésis'), lest the "patriote population de l'endroit" offer him the "bain de pureté" for which Zola had called on behalf of France. He thus returns to the maliciously playful tone more often on display in earlier articles on the Affair, while retaining those earlier quips' ideological core; the joke rests on a final affirmation of

Dreyfus' treachery, and asserts the truer Frenchness of the Bretons in comparison to Dreyfus' Alsatian Judaism and Zola's Italian-Provençal roots.

The choice of Brittany for the final shot is primarily motivated by Céard's recent relocation to the region from Paris, following his retirement from the Musée Carnavalet.[334] However, its subtext in 'Némésis' is Céard's conviction in the truth of the French character having Celtic roots. In an article entirely devoted to the question ('Pas Latins') in 1898, he had declared "nous sommes Celtes, et nous sommes las qu'on nous déguise en étrangers et en latins ». As the quintessentially Celtic people remaining in France, the Bretons thus assumed for Céard the role of a living embodiment of Frenchness as he understood it, and it is on this allegorical note that his analysis of the Dreyfus Affair ends.

It is clear how deeply reliant Céard was on his literary training and ideas for his perspective on the Dreyfus Affair. The fact that that perspective was in demand from newspaper editors underscores the more broadly literary dimensions of the crisis. With almost every daily running a serial narrative along the bottom of its front page, and literary education yet to be challenged by science or economics in the average Frenchman's schooling, the larger-than-life personalities and complicated, often occult narrative of the Affair lent themselves naturally to interpretation in the manner of a novel.

More than this, however, close reading of Céard's articles reveals the denseness of the polemical form in the hands of a practiced exponent. Fleeting turns of phrase are loaded with historical or ideological significance, and the panoply of techniques on display are placed in the

[334] By extraordinary coincidence, Céard found himself in the Breton port of Haliguen when the ship bearing Dreyfus back to France for retrial made landfall there. He noted his impressions of the nighttime scene in an article discussed by Henri Mitterand in *Zola* v.III, pp. 620-1.

service of an initially thinly-veiled, and ever more strident, political perspective. Céard's anti-Dreyfusism places him at the centre of the emerging nationalist ideological spectrum of the time, and his early adherence to the Ligue de la Patrie Française allows us to infer from him to the mass of now faceless members drawn to its cause in 1899. As a less-famous figure than the likes of Lemaitre and Barrès, he provides a closer connection to the rank-and-file membership whose personal views have not survived to the present day.

The hardening of Céard's opinions as the Dreyfus Affair progressed and started to abate, and his increasing distance from the available evidence, remind us that the crisis was a personal matter, regardless of how high the stakes climbed. As such, Céard and many others persisted in their anti-Dreyfusard convictions long after the fundamentals of the cause had been placed into extreme doubt, for reasons often resting on antagonism to what the Dreyfusards represented. In Céard's case, it was Zola who, both personally and aesthetically, had become a figure of despite. The polemic provided Céard with an opportunity to take a vengeance on Zola in the political arena that he had not in the literary, and he did so by treating Zola the same way the older man had his Rougon-Macquart characters. Authority and authorship combined in Zola's legal defence and Céard's attacks on that enterprise.

The final lesson provided by the case of Céard is the importance of *how* in a subject such as the Dreyfus Affair. It is usually more intuitive to ask *why* something happens, and a quick survey of opinion and magazine articles' headlines at a given moment will confirm the greater capital 'why' possesses. Yet in certain contexts, understanding how a process plays out from its initial premises is equally, if not more, valuable. Henry Céard's anti-Dreyfusism is rather straightforward in its whys: a personal antipathy to Zola combined with conservative politics. But the hows of its expression open a window into a type of figure, the journeyman journalist,

and a type of milieu, the realigning French right-wing, that reveal a great deal about both the Affair and fin-de-siècle society as a whole. The case of Saint-Georges de Bouhélier will, likewise, illustrate the importance of asking 'how?'

Naturism and the Dreyfus Affair

The late 1890s were the period of the Dreyfus Affair, but in the French literary scene they also saw the brief flourishing of the school that called itself *naturisme*, and that I will refer to as naturism. Although the movement did not achieve lasting renown, for a few years it seemed poised to become the dominant school of French poetry, positioning itself as a reaction to the perceived inadequacies of symbolism and drawing the attention of future luminaries such as Gide and Francis Jammes. Yet it was Guillaume Apollinaire who would be most associated with the movement, as late as 1910, by which time its main advocates had long ceased their campaign.[335] Writing in 1908, Apollinaire himself commented that "la plus importante manifestation poétique qui, frappant l'esprit des jeunes gens de ma génération, se soit opposée au symbolisme, dont elle découlait, s'est appelée: le naturisme. Il venait à son heure et séduisit beaucoup de nouveaux poètes."[336]

My purpose here will not be to replot the trajectory of naturism's rise and fall,[337] but to argue that the aesthetic ideas underpinning naturism can illuminate a dimension of Dreyfusism that often passes unacknowledged: its ability to include nationalist, even xenophobic ideologies more closely associated with the likes of Maurice Barrès. In other words, there was such a thing as reactionary Dreyfusism, an allegiance to that cause that cared little for human rights, judicial process, or political control, the usual motivations of the Dreyfusards, but that instead rested on a fantasy of national identity conceived in explicitly aestheticized terms. To note this is to go further than other revisions of the traditional picture of the Affair, in which the Dreyfusards are

---

[335] Willard Bohn, *Apollinaire and the International Avant-Garde*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), p.20.
[336] Guillaume Apollinaire, 'La phalange nouvelle', in *Oeuvres Complètes* v. 3, Ed. Michel Décaudin (Paris: Balland and Lecat, 1966), .p.760.
[337] For a detailed examination of the movement's short history, see Patrick L. Day's *Saint-Georges de Bouhélier's* Naturisme: *an Anti-Symbolist Movement in Late Nineteenth-Century French Poetry* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001).

shown to have self-interested motives, excessive zeal or to have undertaken punitive actions when in power. Rather, the history of naturism and the Dreyfus Affair demonstrates that Dreyfusards could not only mirror the worst traits of their opponents; they could *share* many of their defining beliefs, and be forced to rely on a return to literature in order to articulate a Dreyfusard position.

As such, the case of Saint-Georges de Bouhélier is perhaps the clearest demonstration of this dissertation's central thesis: that the Dreyfus Affair demonstrates how aesthetics can be used as a source for political discourse, as a tool of engagement rather than as a reflection of it. It is the strongest example of that idea because of the utter necessity of aesthetics to the young poet's engagement on the Dreyfusard side; without them, everything else about his ideology would have directed him to the other camp.

The two principal champions of naturism were de Bouhélier and his friend and colleague Maurice Le Blond. The latter is still familiar to many of those acquainted with Zola's work, for Le Blond became his posthumous son-in-law, marrying Zola's daughter Denise in 1908. Le Blond went on to edit the first complete edition of Zola's work, published by Fasquelle in the 1920s. In the heyday of naturism, his role was that of chief analyst and attack dog of the movement, leaving to de Bouhélier the task of producing aesthetic treatises and poetic work that would illustrate its principles. These principles revolved around the belief that symbolism had largely failed as a poetics, by turning away from the natural world and forsaking the ethical potential Le Blond and de Bouhélier saw in poetry.

In 1896, Le Blond published an *Essai sur le Naturisme* whose preface was deliberately provocative and guaranteed to incense many of his and de Bouhélier's peers in the republic of

letters.[338] This aspect of Le Blond's writing on naturism would not palliate with time, and ultimately contributed to the school's demise, as the number of writers antagonized by the young critic's tone continued to grow. In the *Essai*'s preface, Le Blond immediately describes (in the very first paragraph) the previous generation of symbolist poets as "cosmopolites et embrumés." The use of "cosmopolite" as an insult may seem surprising, when one considers that its use was a staple of anti-Dreyfusard rhetoric against those supporting the captain, and generally alluded to a chauvinist mentality on the part of the writer. We shall see that this is precisely what distinguishes the Dreyfusism of the naturists, and makes their aesthetic and political stances worthy of study in the context of this project. Both in literature and in politics, Le Blond and de Bouhélier took a hard nationalist line that can bemuse the present-day scholar, not only given their support of Dreyfus but also in the light of their youth and marginality within the literary scene.

The fact that many authors associated with symbolism themselves became Dreyfusard is further testimony of the patchwork of ideas underlying the binary choice of being for or against Dreyfus. To return to Le Blond's essay, he moves quickly to assert the novelty of naturism's aesthetic, defined both negatively, against the tendentious characterization of symbolism he employs, and positively, through the assertion of his and his colleagues' belief in "un panthéisme gigantesque et radieux." Such a doctrine makes naturism's sympathy towards Zola's work unsurprising; indeed, *La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret*, the fifth novel of the *Rougon-Macqart* cycle, was and has continued to be singled out as clear indication of Zola's own tendency towards pantheism.

[338] Like most volumes of criticism at the time, it was a collection of his recent newspaper and journal articles.

It features a young priest, Serge Mouret, who suffers a twin crisis of faith and health. He is taken in and nursed back to strength by a young woman, Albine, with whom he falls in love. These scenes take place in a large Provencal garden called le Paradou (underlining the narrative's borrowings from Biblical themes). However, Serge finally deserts Albine under the menacing influence of the monk Archangias, who induces the young priest to return to his country parish despite his theological doubts, and she commits suicide by the implausible means of suffocation from flower 'fumes'. The Paradou scenes notably feature a giant tree whose power awes Serge and Albine when they encounter it, and Zola's hostility to organized religion manifests itself through this expression of the force residing in the natural world and its superiority to the superstitious and destructive beliefs wielded by Archangias.

We will see that Zola's aesthetics were not by any means accepted as a complete package by either Le Blond or de Bouhélier; they are constantly at pains to distinguish themselves from the older man's writing and ideas, even as they champion him against other literary styles. However, this aspect of his writing, although only an intermittent presence in his novels, was among those most appealing to the naturists. Le Blond explains that "les jeunes hommes tendent à se passionner pour des Edens charnels", before stating a kind of credo of naturism in the following short paragraph:

> Dans l'étreinte universelle, nous voulons rajeunir notre individu. Nous revenons vers la nature. Nous recherchons l'émotion saine et divine. Nous nous moquons de l'Art pour l'Art et de ces questions si vaines et stériles.[339]

[339] Maurice le Blond, *Essai sur le Naturisme* (Paris: Editions du Mercure de France, 1896), p.14.

La Blond portrays symbolists and those writers, notably Baudelaire, who had inspired them as fixated on the exceptional and unwholesome, at the expense of nature and the salubrious feelings it can inspire. The doctrine of art for art's sake, of which symbolism is painted as the ultimate avatar, is not deconstructed but dismissed with scorn. However, Le Blond does implicitly offer a reason for the vanity of 'l'art pour l'art' before long, in his first mention of his close friend: "il faudrait que le public apprenne qu'il existe des jeunes hommes comme Saint-Georges de Bouhélier qui lutte pour un art national, qui a écrit de fort beaux livres où – ailleurs que chez les symbolistes, - plusieurs esprits ont discerné déjà le sceau du génie." The mention of 'art national' announces the nationalist tone Le Blond himself, and more forcefully de Bouhélier, would take in setting out their aesthetics. For art to be national, any autotelism must be rejected in favour of a concern for inculcating the system of national values envisioned by the author. The specifics of the naturist conception of 'art national' will be discussed in greater detail below.

These allusive elements are found in the brief foreword to the *Essai sur le Naturisme*, which is followed by a longer preface in which the political dimension of the naturist project emerges more clearly. Le Blond begins dramatically by claiming that "malgré les prétentieux sentiments dont s'illusionne notre vanité nationale, c'est aujourd'hui un fait avéré que la décadence de l'âme latine." He positions himself as marginal by referring to "le sacrifice des martyres anarchistes", a provocative statement referring to the wave of attacks carried out earlier in the decade by anarchists, which provoked the passing of the "lois scélérates" by the French parliament. The laws enabling that clampdown began in December 1893, after the National Assembly itself was bombed, and targeted the press to prevent publication of opinions supporting terrorist acts, classifying such opinions as crimes in their own right. Le Blond's phrasing could thus have been viewed as an affront to these laws, but he does not appear to have

been pursued for it in the courts; the fact that he was commenting on a set of actions that was already becoming past rather than current, and not inciting the perpetration of more, may have worked in his favour.

In any case, by referring so approvingly to anarchism and its results, Le Blond aligns himself with the political far left, in a manner inconsistent with his previous, and future, declarations on nationalism and art. Walter L. Adamson keenly observes that "naturism embodied an intense desire to find new ways for a young generation of artists to have an impact on French politics in the aftermath of the French police clampdown on anarchism in 1894."[340] The Dreyfus Affair would provide a focus for that desire, and both the passions it inspired and the passivity of government it exposed would allow an aestheticization of politics that fit directly into the naturists' preoccupations.

For all this, anarchism's hostility to the state appears to be at odds with Le Blond and de Bouhélier's concern with making France strong through its literature. It might be possible to reconcile the two positions by arguing that 'France' was, for the naturists, the nation rather than the state. However, the more reasonable conclusion to draw is that Le Blond's comment on the 'martyrs', to which he does not return, serves the rhetorical purpose of lending him and his ideas an avant-garde gloss, via the anti-establishment and dangerous practices of anarchism. The longing for aesthetic-political engagement suggested by Adamson does not imply a consonance of views with anarchism itself. Instead, it becomes clear that Le Blond's enthusiasm for anarchism is motivated by the active and engaged nature of the attacks, which are opposed to the solipsistic and sometimes perverted practices of a youth generally in the sway of symbolism: "les

[340] Walter L. Adamson, *Embattled Avant-Gardes: Modernism's Resistance to Commodity Culture in Europe* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U. of California Press, 2007), p.123.

pires perversions ascétiques ont des dévots et c'est comme une émulation pour…l'anormal qui nous éloigne de l'humanité, nous incite à des jeux esthétiques et à des complications cérébrales."[341]

Since most perversions require a partner (or several) and square poorly with asceticism, masturbation appears to be the subject of Le Blond's allusion. Further evidence of this is provided when he proceeds to attack Huysmans as an unworthy victor in critical esteem over his erstwhile mentor Zola. Maintaining his provocative tone, Le Blond vitriolically describes Huysmans as a "psychologue saugrenu et sans passion, aride écrivain de faciles monographies déliquescentes, d'une réalisme grossier, pénible et sans syntaxe." Huysmans' late success has stemmed from the leanings of the "élite intellectuelle, qui…se divertit béatement aux manies cénobitiques, aux deformations psychologiques d'aussi médiocres prototypes que des Esseintes ou Durtal." The most important phrase to pick out from this rant[342] is "manies cénobitiques", which has a significant history and future.

As discussed in the previous chapter, any mention of monastic masturbation in the context of naturalism after 1887 was almost certainly a reference to the open letter '*La Terre*. A Emile Zola', better known today as the 'Manifeste des Cinq'. Zola's reliance on "des manies de moine solitaire", according to the five young attack dogs who authored it, has been observed. Le Blond reuses the idea of 'manies', whose undertone is as clear in his work as it is in the

[341] *Essai sur le Naturisme,* p.19.
[342] See Alain Pagès' *La Bataille Littéraire : Essai sur la Réception du Naturisme à l'Epoque de Germinal* for an authoritative analysis of the hyperbolic traits of literary polemics in the period. A combination of extremely liberal laws on freedom of the press, passed in 1881, and the overcrowded literary field which made attracting notice as an unheralded author or critic extremely challenging, frequently produced writing about literature of which Le Blond's example is typical.

'Manifeste', but substitutes 'cénobite' for 'moine'.[343] The more significant substitution is, of course, that of Huysmans (or at least his characters, of whom Durtal in particular was a thinly-veiled self-portrait) for Zola as the agent of these 'manies'. He thus retains Bonnetain,[344] Rosny and friends' dubious denunciation of masturbation's effects on the quality of literature, simply shifting the charge from one author to another. In Le Blond's case this charge is marginally less gratuitous than in the 'Manifeste', since it forms part of a set of characteristics viewed as symptomatic of the decline of French youth under the influence of symbolism and decadence.

The question remains whether Céard was also aware of Le Blond's use of the accusation of onanism, or whether he inspired himself directly from the 'Manifeste': as Céard also uses the term 'cénobite', his knowledge of Le Blond cannot be ruled out. However, given Le Blond's restricted readership, and the fact that Céard, as an older author with different concerns, would not have been greatly interested in seeking out the younger man's text, the similarity is most likely a coincidence driven by the shared desired to find a synonym for 'moine' when referencing the 1887 'Manifeste'. Either way, despite the marginality of its authors and the patent absurdity of most of their claims, the examples of Le Blond and Céard point to the rhetorical influence of that text on future discourse surrounding naturalism.

The topos of monastic masturbation also highlights the importance of ideas of productivity and virility to an understanding of the literary field in early Third Republic France. Whether under Zola's own pen or those of his defenders and detractors, the idea that properly-

[343] Although clearly intended as a synonym of 'moine', a 'cénobite' is in fact a monk belonging to a religious order stressing community life. It is thus an inappropriate term for Le Blond's purposes, to the extent that a cenobite presumably has less time to indulge in the practice both he and the five naturalists had been implicitly condemning.
[344] The irony of the author of *Charlot s'Amuse*, a novel centred around onanism and whose claimed cautionary nature was enough to convince the censors but not the majority of readers, accusing Zola of a fondness for masturbation was not lost on his contemporaries. 'Bonnemain' and 'Dupoignet' were among the nicknames he earned from his literary activity (René-Pierre Colin, *Zola, Renégats et Alliés*, p.295).

achieved abundance is the goal of the author returns time and again. Such abundance must be attuned to the audience, in a form of 'intercourse', which obviates the sterility of "manies cénobitiques." Le Blond inflects the image slightly by alleging the shared perversion of Huysmans and his elitist public, all guilty of a kind of mutual masturbation which must be consigned to the past. His hostility to elites, furthermore, foreshadows arguments by Brunetière and Barrès (among others) against the "intellectuels" as they involved themselves in the Dreyfus Affair, and he approves those young authors "qui abandonnent les chancellantes tours d'ivoire."

Le Blond thus offers to a similar argument to those advanced 20 years before by Zola, stating that "les prochaines réformes littéraires, après toutes ces crises anormales et ces tentatives capricieuses, aboutiront à un effort simpliste."[345] This recalls Zola's advocacy of the "absence de style" as crucial to producing naturalist novels; in both cases, there is an element of reaction against a preceding tradition (the romantic novel of eg. George Sand, for Zola, the hermetic poetry of Mallarmé and his disciples, for Le Blond) which, in the critic's eyes, emphasized complication or inflation over simplicity. We have just seen that this simplicity was intended to be applied to an abundant body of work, but it nevertheless serves as a guiding principle for naturalist and naturist alike.

Le Blond concludes his preface by turning back from literature to the nation. He summarizes four elements of the French tradition with which the new literature must be in harmony: "Paganisme, Chrétienté, Génie national…le movement scientifique."[346] Even the fourth of these is cast in a traditional light, as Le Blond situates its origin in the time immemorial

[345] *Essai sur le Naturisme,* p.22.
[346] ibid., p.24.

of Prometheus and, curiously, "l'inventeur de la charrue."[347] These are "les quatre grandes traditions que doivent rénover pour une définitive synthèse, les jeunes et candides esprits, soucieux d'une œuvre humaine, conforme à la nature."[348] Of course, the *désinvolture* of a young author keen to make his mark plays its part in the development of these ideas, and taking every detail of them seriously would be misguided. Nevertheless, the notion set out here, of a poetics whose primary focus is nature, but which is subject to the imperative of respecting a quadripartite national tradition, is striking in its blending of two such seemingly disparate concerns. The immediacy and universality of nature find themselves yoked to abstract currents of ideas that Le Blond constellates to contour his view of France.

"Paganisme" refers here specifically to the Hellenic tradition; this is made clear by Le Blond's discussion of Moréas and the Ecole Romane, and he only substitutes the term "paganisme" itself for references to Greek antiquity in the conclusion. Of the four, this is, in his view, the least important: "ces vestiges de l'antiquité grecque et de l'esprit hellène ne constituent qu'une minime partie de notre patrimoine intellectuel." Despite the pagan, pantheistic nature of the 'Renaissance' Le Blond hopes to see imminently, he accords a greater place to Christianity than to Hellenism in French thought. "Les paroles de Jésus, sa doctrine, les rites de son culte…nous sont devenus consubstantiels, et ils ont modelé nos facultés émotionnelles." Tradition, then, is so vital to Le Blond's thought that he is willing to concede the importance even of those he finds personally distasteful, stressing that this role of Christianity will be played "malgré nos voeux."

[347] This choice of invention will become more intelligible as the importance of bucolic, everyday life to naturist aesthetics is underlined.
[348] *Essai sur le Naturisme,* p.24.

Neither Hellenism nor Christianity, however, can compare with the power of what appears a more amorphous tradition, the "génie populaire et national." For Le Blond, it is "comme l'émanation de notre sol", but it can most easily be perceived not through the earth but through literature. He lists Villon, as well as the "sentencieux et usuels dictons" of la Fontaine and Verlaine, as examples. It is worth noting that the *Essai sur le Naturisme* is published in October 1896, and thus precedes by several years Barrès' speech on 'La Terre et les Morts' of 1899,[349] in which the former 'prince de la jeunesse' hardens his nationalist line and stresses further the importance of ancestry and the national soil as criteria of Frenchness. Elements of this future doctrine of a leading anti-Dreyfusard can thus be found in the work of a man who would become a supprter of Dreyfus, and (later) the son-in-law of his greatest defender. This underlines the apparent perversity of Le Blond and de Bouhélier's choice, in 1898, to take the side of Dreyfus, against thinkers like Barrès with whom many of their ideas were in close proximity. Céard, as has been shown, also used notions of soil to draw distinctions between himself and Dreyfusards like Paul Alexis. Such concerns were, then, a constant of reflections on the French nation in the 1890s, and were malleable enough to be employed on both sides of the Dreyfus Affair.

Following its 'Avertissement' and 'Préface', the *Essai sur le Naturisme* is divided into 10 chapters, split among topics and authors to which Le Blond is either favourable or unfavourable. The latter are placed first, beginning with a chapter on "La Littérature Artificielle" against which, as indicated, Le Blond had already railed repeatedly in the introductory texts. Mallarmé and Barrès also come in for criticism, the latter in a chapter called "Maurice Barrès et la Littérature Egotiste". The *Essai* follows a progression in which the subject of each chapter is treated more

[349] Delivered on the 10th of March to the Ligue de la Patrie Française (Antoine Compagnon, *Connaissez-Vous Brunetière?*, p.187).

approvingly than that of the last. The turning point, from condemnation to approbation, comes in the fifth chapter, on Emile Verhaeren. As well as Verlaine, Zola, and as an unsurprising crescendo, de Bouhélier, the less-remembered figures of Adolphe Retté and Francis Vielé-Griffin (presented as Walt Whitman's grandson, although Le Blond calls him 'Whitmann' and the lineage appears to be metaphoric rather than genetic) are singled out for the quality of their literary output.

For the purposes of this analysis the two most significant chapters are those on 'Naturalisme et Naturisme', and the final piece on de Bouhélier. Le Blond structures the former text in the form of a moderate critique, judging naturalism's legacy from the standpoint of the naturist principles he sees it as having announced. The chapter thus begins with a double negative, in the sense that he claims not only that he will not recap the intellectual history of naturalism (before doing just that in a long paragraph), but also that the progression of those ideas led to misguided literature: "peu à peu, le naturalisme dévia vers la littérature d'exception."[350] Huysmans again comes in for criticism as the quintessence of everything that went wrong with naturalism.

Having begun by minimizing the value of the earlier school, Le Blond rapidly reverses the movement of his analysis and not only singles out the strengths of Zola's oeuvre, but offers a characterization thereof which stresses aspects not normally considered.

> Jusqu'à Zola, on avait toujours isolé, séparé, divisé les arts. Les rhéteurs nous apprenaient que l'art pouvait être tour à tour, descriptif ou sentimental, personnel ou religieux, comique ou élégiaque. Le premier, ce grand auteur fit une tentative de synthèse. On ne

[350] *Essai sur le Naturisme,* p.115.

> peut retrouver que dans le livre de Job, le VIe chant de l'Odyssée et les Evangiles de Saint-Marc et Saint-Jean, pareil souci de l'eurythmie.[351]

The two first pillars of French tradition identified by Le Blond in his Preface – Hellenism and Christianity – thus return here as antecedents to Zola's project, as the young critic defines it. Zola is an apostle of naturism in the sense that his writing possesses a universal character, which also respects the ancient traditions underpinning French culture. The naturists not only seek pantheism within nature, they also dream of a synthesis of art forms and styles which 'rhéteurs' have been trying to prevent.

> C'est qu'il ne s'efforça jamais de s'opposer à la nature. Il laissa les êtres, docilement, accomplir leur destin, s'harmoniser dans leur milieu et dans la société. Pour ce déterministe, l'individu n'est qu'une phase de l'évolution de l'espèce. Un homme est le produit du passé et de sa race. Il en contient les germes, épars dans son organisme passager, puis les féconde et les perpétue. Il y a une chaîne insensible qui unit et captive les divers membres d'une famille. Chaque faculté ancestrale trouve son développement, se crée et s'épanouit en l'un quelconque de ses descendants.[352]

Read quickly, this might seem to be merely a paraphrase of Zola's own claims on behalf of his work, with terms such as 'milieu', 'déterministe', 'race', and 'famille' all familiar to readers

---

[351] 'Eurythmie' here has nothing to do with the more recent use of the term: the performance art now notably taught in Waldorf schools, and which was only founded in 1911. The term as Le Blond understands it had become commonplace in French criticism, particularly of art, from the mid-19th century: the *Trésor de la Langue Française* defines it as "Beauté harmonieuse résultant d'un agencement heureux et équilibré, de lignes, de formes, de gestes ou de sons". Notable examples of its use include Taine, in his *Philosophie de l'Art* (1865), and Baudelaire, in *Les Paradis Artificiels* of 1860. It thus highly suited to Le Blond's depiction of Zola as a visionary artist whose writing transcends the boundaries of divided arts.

[352] *Essai sur le Naturisme,* p.115.

of the essays collected in *Le Roman Naturaliste*. However, there are significant differences in Le Blond's retelling. The first lies in the subordination of the individual character to the species, and to his family. Zola's focus had been on showing how a given character, whose development was crucial to his plotting, had acquired the traits they possessed. Thus, while Gervaise Macquart was shown to have her limp from the beatings given by her father to her mother while she was in the womb, and her fondness for alcohol from her mother and their shared 'anisette' toping in her youth, *L'Assommoir* is a study of Gervaise, not of the Rougon-Macquart family. Its didactic intent, such as it is, is not to illuminate the family as a whole through Gervaise's example, but to provide social commentary on the dangers posed by drink to the urban working-class.

In Le Blond's analysis, both the individual and social dimensions of Zola's novels are elided in favour of the "chaîne insensible qui unit et captive les divers membres d'une famille." Moreover, he leaves untouched the fact that the chain uniting the Rougon-Macquarts was in fact a 'fêlure', inherited from their matriarch Tante Dide. Their shared genetic inheritance was the neurosis that drives the family's members, sometimes to genius, more often to degradation. Le Blond replaces this truth with the wholesome power of tradition, of which late 19th-century genetics become a biological manifestation.

Viewing inheritance in such a manner is something Le Blond shared with Barrès' mentor Jules Soury. Soury, a professor at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes from 1881 to 1898, was a pioneer of neuropsychology, as well as being a nationalist anti-Semite. His prize-winning book *Le Système Central Nerveux* was published in 1899 but (as its 1863-page length suggests) elaborated over decades; its ideas were transmitted to Barrès and Soury's other students, the novelist having taken Soury's classes at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. Reflecting on his

magnum opus in the pages of *Campagne Nationaliste,* a collection of his nationalist and anti-Semitic articles from 1902, Soury declares:

> Je dédiai ce livre à la mémoire de mes parents, à ce dont je suis, comme nous le sommes tous, que la continuité substantielle, la pensée et le verbe encore vivants avec leur cortège de gestes, d'habitudes et de réactions héréditaires, qui font que le mort tient le vif et que les caractères propres, ethniques et nationaux, nés de variations séculaires, qui différencient le Français de France de l'étranger, ne sont point des métaphores, mais des phénomènes aussi réels que la matière des éléments anatomiques de nos centres nerveux, les neurones, seuls éléments de notre corps qui, de la naissance à la mort de l'individu, persistent sans proliférer ni se renouveler jamais.
>
> Là est le témoignage irréfragable de l'hérédité psychologique. Là est le fondement de notre culte des morts et de la terre où ils ont vécu et souffert, de la religion et de la patrie.[353]

Le Blond differs from Soury in investing what we could call his 'biological traditionalism' with some notion of becoming, since he speaks of the species' evolution and the fulfillment of ancestral faculties. He also, lacking Soury's biological training, speaks rather vaguely of 'germes' as the physical hypostasis of 'race' and tradition,[354] where Soury points

[353] Cited in Zeev Sternhell, *Maurice Barrès et le Nationalisme Français*, p.259. From Jules Soury, *Campagne Nationaliste*.

[354] The term 'germes' dates back to debates on conception arising in the late 17th century, following the discovery of spermatozoa with the newly-created microscope. These debates opposed partisans of epigenesis, the theory in which organisms differentiate in a series of stages over their development, to supporters of preformationism, who held that sex cells contained a smaller variant of the organism which grew to maturity from this miniature, but functionally complete, state. Preformationists often used the term 'germe' in French to describe these 'animalcules' from which the mature organism grows. At the time Le Blond was writing, preformationism had been shown to be false (this occurred at the beginning of the 19th century). His reference to 'germes' thus betrays his lack of biological

instead to neurons. But both men start with the notion of society and shift it into the biological realm, using organic substance to anchor the continuity of individuals with their ancestors and the cultural traditions they inherit.

Why, then, does Le Blond demonstrate such disdain for Barrès, when his own ideas so closely align with those of the man (Soury) who appears to have inspired Barrès to coin the doctrine of "la terre et les morts"? An inspection of Le Blond's chapter on 'Maurice Barrès et la Littérature Egotiste' provides answers. To read it, it is necessary to recall that Le Blond was writing in 1895, before Barrès moved towards the political far right and began the composition of his three-part *Roman de l'Energie Nationale*, whose first installment was *Les Déracinés* (1897). In 1895, Barrès was known to all as the 'prince de la jeunesse', a rare example for the time[355] of a novelist who had achieved mainstream success in his twenties and the author of *Le Culte du Moi*, his first trilogy, which attempted a philosophical definition of the self through the novel. As a result of his concern for selfhood, Barrès was an easy target for those, such as Le Blond, who sought to accuse him of narcissism and/or solipsistic writing.

Ironically, given Barrès' own future writings on the subject of race, Le Blond rapidly brands his subject a product of miscegenation, calling the other man a dilettante and then asserting that "ces dilettantes sont à la vérité des personnes fort curieuses, qui dans la vie des nations, paraissent à cette époque précise où les races s'étant mélangées, certains individus naissent fort hétérogènes et avec une diversité de facultés extraordinaire." Referencing Max Nordau's influential book *Degeneration* (1892), Le Blond further attacks Barrès, claiming that "comme Néron ou Caligula, il est un dégénéré, mais plus intelligent et d'esprit moins pâteux que

---

knowledge, but the fact that he was nevertheless intent on using biology to recast Zola's novels in a traditionalist light speaks to the pervasiveness of biological theories of culture and 'race' in the period.

[355] According to Jean Tharaud, a contemporary and future member of the Académie Française.

ces sombres empereurs." It need not be said that this description is both *ad hominem* and unfounded. Leaving aside the fact that Le Blond's ideas on the psychological results of 'racial mixing' come from nowhere, he does not even attempt to prove that Barrès is himself the product of any such thing. But it is highly significant that a man who himself would, within a few short years, become one of the chief advocates of French racial nationalism should have come in for racist critiques by his contemporaries. Le Blond also distinguishes between degeneracy and mental debility, not denying that Barrès is a fine mind, but siting his supposed susceptibility to a broad range of external stimuli in a putative genetic diversity.

For Le Blond, Barrès and fellow 'dilettantes' are not only out of step with France's ethnic traditions, but with the intellectual heritage he had praised in his preface. Recalling that "les antiques Pyrrohoniens [sic] et les philosophes de la Moyenne Académie, s'imaginaient que la Sagesse était assez proche du sommeil. Pour eux, l'apathie, qui est l'absence complète d'émotions, était un état supérieur", he contrasts this classical ideal with the fervent desire for sensation and 'jouissance' displayed by the dilettantes. Such thinking is diseased: Barrès and friends' "jolies cervelles" in fact need treatment "comme de petits estomacs malades et délabrés." Once again Huysmans may be a point of reference for Le Blond's critique – the conjoining of mental 'jouissance' and physical, specifically digestive, 'détraquement' recalls the travails of Des Esseintes in *A Rebours*. Through the novel, its protagonist suffers an increasingly acute range of physical symptoms, many of them tied to the bowels, as he seeks the elusive aesthetic fulfillment he craves through a succession of modifications to his house and lifestyle.

Such avidity of sensation means that 'quelque friandise' is to be found in any religion or system for a dilettante. "Le dilettante est donc éclectique. Le dilettante est aussi cosmopolite.

Quoi qu'il ne fréquente pas sans relâche et comme M. Bourget, les Tables d'Hôte et les *Kursaals*, il n'est soumis à aucun site, il ne reconnaîtra, nulle part, la frontière de sa patrie."[356] Le Blond makes further allusions to Barrès' travels in Spain and Italy, and the narratives he wrote of them, as evidence of the other man's cosmopolitanism. As the previous citation makes clear, not only was Barrès a target for charges of un-French behaviour and mentality, but Paul Bourget, another of the leading novelists of the time, comes in for similar accusations. This occurs despite the fact that, as noted in the chapter on Céard, Bourget had only three years previously published *Cosmopolis*, a novel in which he depicted negatively just the same dilettantism and lack of national affiliation (in Roman high society) of which Le Blond was now accusing him. Indeed, Bourget's transgressions appear to be more serious, in the younger author's critique, given the use of 'quoique' to introduce the contrast between them and those of Barrès.

This dual assault, on two future pillars of the conservative French literary establishment, one of whom, Bourget, was already publishing works in which nationalist ideology was implicit, demonstrates not only the proximity in thought between Le Blond and them (due to the terms Le Blond uses to form his critique), but also the fact that no-one was 'safe' from charges of un-Frenchness in this period. In the case of Barrès, Le Blond's antipathy clearly stems from the fact that the nationalist views of the 'prince de la jeunesse' had not yet clearly taken form, and that, at the time of Le Blond's writing the *Essai*, Barrès was still best known for the *Culte du Moi* novels and his travel narratives of foreign lands.

The perceived elitism and ultimate emotional detachment of Barrès' method and writing was also at odds with Le Blond and de Bouhélier's sympathy for the common man: "une exclamation trop sincère paraîtrait…une offense au beau style et aux bonnes moeurs. Il pense en

[356] *Essai sur le Naturisme,* pp.51-2.

effet que seuls les hommes grossiers sont susceptibles de passion."[357] Indeed, Le Blond opposes a phrase of de Bouhélier's to those of Barrès, so as to foreground the naturist concern with simplicity and praxis ("ce que pense un bouvier, un roi, ne vaut pas que l'on s'y attarde. Ils gardent d'autant moins d'intérêt que plus d'émotions les exaltent, car ces émotions les détournent des rites")[358]

However, Le Blond's willingness to tar Bourget, a writer whose nationalism had already become quite clearly affirmed, with the same brush is more puzzling. It can best be ascribed to the hyperbolic nature of the young man's writing, to his constant desire to attack those he did not elect his allies or forebears. It will be seen that this tendency of Le Blond's was partly responsible for the demise of naturism, in the months following Zola's own polemical travails concerning 'J'Accuse...!'. There is also a more specific reason, evidenced when Le Blond brings up Bourget for the second time in the Barrès chapter. "Si un romancier se préoccupe uniquement de la façon dont sont émus les hommes, il restreint l'art à quelques personnalités d'élite. C'est ainsi que M. Paul Bourget ne s'intéressera qu'à quelques mondains bien doués, et que Maurice Barrès – qui est plus délicat – ne trouvera sa suffisance que dans son propre miroir."[359] Bourget's depiction of an international elite – the people who would become the 'jet set' once commercial flight was invented – meant that Le Blond, by virtue of his naturist convictions, could assimilate the novelist to his creations, despite the failings Bourget highlighted in them.

[357] ibid., p.54.
[358] Taken from de Bouhélier's *La Vie Héroïque*.
[359] *Essai sur le Naturisme,* p.57-8.

Whatever the explanation for the attacks directed at Barrès and Bourget, it raises the question of how an author of such pronounced nationalist leaning could have been won over to the Dreyfusard cause in 1898. The answer will require a return to Le Blond's chapter on Zola. Although the young critic praises Zola, he also draws contrasts between naturism and naturalism and highlights what he sees as the failings of Zola's writing. Thus he finally acknowledges the 'tare héréditaire' borne by the characters featured in the *Rougon-Macquart*, and speaks disapprovingly of its consequences: "nul ne s'èlève à une haute beauté morale…L'individu n'est jamais pur, seules les fonctions des hommes sont divines, et c'est sur celles-ci qu'il eût fallu insister."

Here, Le Blond closely adheres to de Bouhélier's more poetically expressed aesthetics, as demonstrated by *La Vie Héroique,* a text contemporary with the *Essai sur le Naturisme*. De Bouhélier's most aphoristic relation of the idea Le Blond reuses to critique Zola is "l'existence quotidienne travestit la vie éternelle."[360] More specifically, de Bouhélier speaks of common men as having lost awareness of their own divine nature, which is (unbeknownst to them) expressed through ritual and tradition; "ces bas esclaves, certes, ont perdu la trace pâle des divinités; ils ne savent plus les rites, les eurythmies..."[361] It is the poet's role to reinterpret these rites and actions, for instance those of the village festival: "les citadins ont des fêtes patronales….Héroisme immense, angélique, paisible!"[362] In contrast, a descriptive focus on the personal actions of ordinary folk, at the expense of their labour or their rituals, can only degrade them and obfuscate their divine aspect. "Car un dieu, dans tout homme, s'exprime, et malgré ses pires sentiments, ses

[360] Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, *La Vie Héroïque des Aventuriers, des Poètes, des Rois, et des Artisans* (Paris: L. Vanier, 1895) I, p.33 (epigram).
[361] ibid., p.112.
[362] ibid., p.77.

luxures basses et ses laideurs."[363] Le Blond, for his part, sums up this aspect of naturist aesthetics, that differentiates it from naturalism, by stating that

> Le naturiste s'oppose au naturaliste, en ce qu'à l'observation il préfère l'émotion. Sacrifiant la documentation exacte, il estime davantage les sites éternels. Il est moins pittoresque, mais plus sublime et néglige les individus pour les archétypes. Ainsi il peut créer des héros véridiques et atteindre, en même temps, à l'Epopée.[364]

It is clear, then, that Le Blond's role in elaborating naturist aesthetics was that of mouthpiece – he retranscribes de Bouhélier's ideas, which were usually published directly as books rather than articles and tended frequently towards *prose poétique*, into simpler, often more polemical language. (We will see however, that de Bouhélier was himself perfectly willing to wax polemical when he felt it necessary, particularly in drafting his 'Manifeste naturiste' for *le Figaro* in 1897.) Le Blond contributes little novel thought to de Bouhélier's declarations, with even the slightly biological tilt discernable early in the essay on 'Naturalisme et Naturisme' an echo of the following passage from *La Vie Héroique*: "Consubstantiels à une contrée…les dieux naissent d'un site et d'un homme. – Le paysage qui les enfante, eucharystique, s'y solemnise, lourd de germes et d'hérédités."[365] But he melds political concerns with the group's attempts to secure literary authority sooner than his friend. De Bouhélier's rejection of foreign influence in the French literary scene is expressed in 1896 and 1897, while Le Blond, as illustrated, is already using xenophobia as a tool in his literary opinions in the *Essai* of 1895. Thus it seems that de Bouhélier dominated the group's aesthetic direction, with Le Blond in turn inducing the other man's increasing references to politics.

---

[363] ibid., p.114.
[364] *Essai sur le Naturisme,* p.119.
[365] *La Vie Héroïque* II, p.111.

For all the insistence on Frenchness they display in their aesthetics, both Le Blond and de Bouhélier occasionally express a belief in the transnational power of naturism, which is perhaps unsurprising given their relentless focus on 'Eternité' as a characteristic of the school. Le Blond, seeking once more to demarcate naturism from the artistic movements that had preceded it in the 19th century, thus speaks of how "le naturisme se différencie de l'art pour l'Art qui est relatif aux sentiments du poète, et de l'Art Social qui est éphémère, asservi à l'esprit, aux instincts d'une époque ou d'une nation."[366] Quite what the distinction is between naturism's reliance on soil and ritual to draw out the eternal characteristics of the people it depicts, and *l'Art Social*'s supposed subservience to a national context, is not fully clear, and given the cursory nature of Le Blond's reference perhaps does not merit lengthy consideration.

What matters is the critic's willingness to set aside the national context, in a manner out of keeping with the bulk of his declarations. In a similar vein, de Bouhélier, in his early essay *Le Livre Instrument Spirituel* of 1894, had linked the invention of print to a progressive unification of the human spirit through literature: "D'âge en âge, grâce à l'homme de lettres, on voit se lier les gens, se pénétrer les races, se transfuser les nations, et voici que devient maintenant, chaque jour, plus proche l'unification spirituelle de la planète !"[367] Over the following years, such declarations would vanish from texts written in support of naturism, in favour of an increasingly Gallic focus. Similarly to Céard over the course of his Dreyfus-era articles, then, or to Barrès during the 1890s, the naturists were subject to a hardening of their nationalism, and to its increasing interpenetration with their aesthetic views.

[366] *Essai sur le Naturisme,* p.121.
[367] Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, *Choix de Pages* (Paris: Arthur Herbert, 1907), pp. 172-3.

Further evidence of this is provided by de Bouhélier's opinions on Wagner. As Patrick Day points out, only months elapse between the publication of de Bouhélier's *L'Hiver en Méditation* – essentially a further aesthetic treatise despite its formal presentation as a novel – and the 'Manifeste du Naturisme' featured in the *Figaro* of January the 10th, 1897. Yet Wagner's stature is viewed quite differently in the 'Manifeste' and the 'Opuscule sur Hugo, Richard Wagner, Zola et la poésie nationale' that had been appended to *L'Hiver en Méditation*. In the latter, de Bouhélier accords Wagner an analogous role in German identity formation to that he sees Hugo and Zola playing in France. And this role is crucial to the poet's art, as these men are called on to "à nos personnelles conceptions substituer la pensée d'une race." More clearly than in de Bouhélier's earlier, more allusive aesthetic writings, nationalism is enshrined as a central pillar in his thought.

Nationalism quickly lists towards xenophobia when Wagner returns in the 'Manifeste du Naturisme'. As Day puts it, "Wagner, whom Bouhélier had described in *L'hiver* as a hero to the Germans, now represents a threat to France".[368] Of course the two are by no means mutually exclusive, particularly in the late 19th century, but de Bouhélier had restricted himself to urging the separation of national traditions in the 'Opuscule'. Come the 'Manifeste', however, Wagner forms part of a triumvirate, with Nietzsche and Ibsen, portrayed as maintaining French minds "dans une servitude spirituelle." De Bouhélier explicitly analogizes, even maximizes, this perceived cultural conquest over that of Germanic armies sweeping across France:

> Le triomphe de ces étrangers sur la littérature ethnique de nos pays nous semble plus terrible et mauvais que l'invasion des conquérantes armées allemandes. Leur pensée qui nous accapare défigure l'esprit de la race. Toutes nos déroutes militaires ne me paraissent

[368] Day, *Saint-Georges de Bouhélier's* Naturisme, p.53.

> pas aussi effrayantes que cette conquête intellectuelle où sont parvenus récemment, malgré Zola, malgré Barrès, malgré Bruneau et Gustave Charpentier, les dramaturges norvégiens et allemands.[369]

There are several points of note in this extract, despite the exaggerated nature of its claims and the concessions apparently made not only to the polemical imperative supplied by the manifesto genre, but also to *Le Figaro*'s mainstream, conservative readership, for whom *revanche* was an appealing and widely-accredited notion.[370] The most obvious example of de Bouhélier's appealing to the doctrine is in the previous paragraph, where he states that "il est également possible d'atteindre, grâce aux odes et aux drames, à une sorte de puissance morale qui confine à la dictature, comme Hugo, Wagner et Zola en donnent l'exemple en ce siècle." Thus Wagner switches triumvirates, for the worse, in the space of a few lines; de Bouhélier starts by resurrecting the terms of his recent 'opuscule', only to turn on Wagner when his influence on French thought is raised. Aesthetics are dramatically superseded by the claimed political necessity of preserving French culture; culture is tied directly to ethnicity through the phrases 'littérature ethnique' and 'l'esprit de la race'. Or rather, the same aesthetic-political power that makes Wagner admirable in his German context becomes toxic when disseminated in France. Literature is conceived of as a vehicle for ethnic modes of thinking that survive translation into French, and in so doing pose a threat to a 'natural' form of reasoning possessed by the French.

Other revanchist passages in the 'Manifeste' include that, located in the article's first column, in which de Bouhélier rhetorically asks: "avec cette sanguine énergie que nous ont transmise nos pères, comment pourrions-nous accueillir les poètes septentrionaux ? La puissance

[369] Cited in Day, ibid., p.53.
[370] This same readership would, later that year, begin cancelling its subscriptions en masse, as Zola's campaign for Dreyfus began in *Le Figaro*'s pages.

ethnique nous domine. Ce n'est pas en vain qu'une nation subit de telles guerres. La haine se communique de l'un à l'autre." That the manifesto for a new school of poetry should begin by proudly evoking the hatred of Germanic races,[371] passed down from older generations to those born after the debacle of 1870, testifies to the pervasive power of revanchism in the early Third Republic, to its capacity to enter and dominate other forms of discourse. Indeed de Bouhélier trumpets the domination that "la puissance ethnique" supposedly exerts on his generation. The naturists offer a clear example of an ostensibly aesthetic movement in which a latent commitment to a political stance manifests itself under external pressures, such as the need to demarcate oneself from the prevailing aesthetics of the time, in this case the success of German and Norwegian literature, music, and philosophy.

The need to be 'strong', in the face of recent military failures, is translated into an avoidance of sentimentality, located in the foreign writings de Bouhélier rejects: "ce qui caractérise les jeunes hommes de vingt ans, c'est moins un charme de véhémence et de tendresse[372] que le culte de leur sol et des traditions." The shift from the earlier aesthetic treatises to the 'Manifeste' resides partly in the importance of soil and ritual being displaced from the objects of poetry (the common people) to its subjects, the "jeunes hommes de vingt ans" for whom de Bouhélier professes to speak. Ritual had been defined positively in *La Vie Héroique* and its companion treatises, *Discours sur la Mort de Narcisse* and *La Résurrection des Dieux*, as a memory of the divine nature in rural folk which the poet's work could draw forth once more: working the soil, synergizing oneself with the landscape, afford the same opportunity for a pantheistic experience, de Bouhélier asserts. Yet in the 'Manifeste du Naturisme', where one

[371] Later de Bouhélier bafflingly refers to these sentiments as 'haines généreuses'.
[372] This 'charme' is attributed to "tant de chimériques romances,..allégories et de drames languissants dont Richard Wagner, Tolstoï et Ibsen nous ont inspiré le gout…L'emphase germanique ne nous séduit plus."

might have expected to read a crystallization of the ideas that had earned de Bouhélier the opportunity to write it,[373] those ideas are instead systematically altered, with ritual defined almost negatively as a poetic prophylactic against Germanic subversions.

De Bouhélier goes so far as to claim that despite the tragic consequences of defeat by Prussia for France, "je ne puis trop m'en désoler, tant est grand l'amour que m'inspirent les lettres, en considération des magnifiques profits que celles-ci en ont retirés." These 'profits' are preservation from "tous ces jeux de rythme et de sentiment où se complaisent nos aînés." Defeat has galvanized the younger generation of Frenchmen, imparting to them an energy not possessed by their elders who were drawn to symbolism. The young naturist presents literature as a career befitting this renewed energy in a way that politics, with its compromises and transience, does not. "La politique ne prête à un homme de talent qu'un emploi sans beauté, d'ailleurs tout à fait provisoire." Not only, then, is naturism presented as a literary antidote to foreign ideas, but the very choice of a literary career is advocated only in terms of its ultimately greater political potential than that of elected office. Where the aesthetic texts had expressed sympathy with the common man as an object for poetic creation, in his quotidian activity whose transcendental aspect it was the poet's task to express, here solidarity is expressed instead through shared xenophobia: "l'antipathie que l'Allemagne et les étrangers inspirent à la masse populaire, nous la possédons également. Je pense que nous l'emploierons contre Ibsen, Wagner, Tolstoï." The similarity with Céard's chauvinistic declarations in the course of his Dreyfus-era articles is apparent; the former naturalist equally used 'les étrangers' as a negative focal point on numerous

[373]It was at Zola's urging, and through his influence with *Le Figaro* which was, at the time, publishing his *Nouvelle Campagne*, that de Bouhélier was able to publish the 'Manifeste' in that newspaper (Day, *Saint-Georges de Bouhélier's* Naturisme, p.93). But he had already been incited to write a manifesto for his school not only by Paul Fort, in whose review *Le Livre d'Art* de Bouhélier and friends had reserved for them a 'rubrique' called 'Pages Naturistes', but also by Barrès himself. It seems that Barrès was either unaware of Le Blond's attack article against him from the previous year, or he did not hold de Bouhélier complicit in its publication and reasoning.

occasions. The question of how de Bouhélier could go from such a position to outspoken support of Dreyfus in little more than a year poses itself still more sharply.

Only after these considerations, which occupy the entirety of the 'Manifeste''s first two columns (in other words, its first half), does de Bouhélier begin discussing the programme of naturism, how young authors should go about fulfilling the cultural and political goals he has summarized in the manifesto thus far. This is accomplished first by listing the positive models from whom counter-examples to Wagner and company can be drawn; the principal French triumvirate to which de Bouhélier appeals is that of Zola, Rodin and Monet. All three respect the French traditions of "le culte classique de la nature et de l'homme", as had men such as Rabelais, Poussin and Balzac before them. Zola is praised for reviving "les qualités d'ordonnance qui forment la base du caractère français", illustrating that de Bouhélier was not without discernment as a literary critic when he chose to focus on the texts themselves rather than their ideological context: Zola's powers of structure and organization in the novel have continued to form the basis of much subsequent criticism.[374]

The attempt to define French character through a quintessential trait is something de Bouhélier shared with Brunetière, among others, in this period. For Brunetière, this trait was not orderliness, but sociability, and he objected to Zola's writing in large part on the basis that its often stark portrayals of the working class would drive a wedge between French citizens, rather than encouraging a sociable polity. 'Ordonnance', on the other hand, was a quality far easier to identify in the *Rougon-Macquart.*

[374] Henri Mitterand and Philippe Hamon, in particular, have drawn attention to Zola's almost architectural use of narrative techniques and character, respectively, in crafting his fiction.

Rodin is praised for his ability to retain an aspect of chthonic force in his media, whether they be "la mystérieuse torpeur du marbre ou de l'airain", and to express the earthly origin of "des héros éternels." Monet, for his part, meets approval for his portrayal of landscape, which, as indicated above, is central to the naturist aesthetic. Thus, while naturism is a poetic movement, its emphasis on the environment and the eternal drives de Bouhélier to find models in other art forms in which these categories are more traditionally central.

Yet, after these more clearly aesthetic considerations, the young critic swiftly brings nationalism and the military back into the discussion, once again portraying art as a substitute for other occupations whose impact on the world is less in doubt: "l'art prochain sera héroïque. Aussi, nous sommes-nous constitué une nouvelle conception du monde. C'est que cette ivresse militaire qui exultait naguère si fortement nos pères s'est transformé chez nous en une sorte de culte de la force." He then goes further and asserts his generation's craving for a war which will bring more glory to them than can poetry: "nous réclamons l'occasion d'offrir à notre énergie un emploi plus naturel, où nous pourrons la dépenser magnifiquement. En attendant, nous écrivons des poèmes." After poetry as a substitute for politics, comes poetry as a substitute for battle. But whereas politics was rejected not for its inaccessibility, but for its unworthiness, military exploits are presented as the sovereign occupation for a young man's 'energy', the only reason for not seeking them out being that there was no war to fight.

Thus, after over three-quarters of the 'Manifeste du Naturisme', de Bouhélier has not directly exposed any part of his movement's aesthetic. Much of it can, of course, be gleaned by the careful reader from its first three columns, but only ever indirectly, through the allusions, counter-examples and predecessors marshalled by the author. The focus is, instead, relentlessly

nationalistic, to the point of subordinating poetry entirely to extra-literary concerns such as the need to protect French culture from Northern encroachment, and enthusiasm for a war of revenge against Germany. Even when de Bouhélier picks out predecessors to naturism, it is couched in terms of their respecting "l'esprit national" and "le caractère français."[375] Examining de Bouhélier's other journalism helps answer the question of whether the centre-right readership of *Le Figaro*, and the magnitude of the opportunity inherent in the publication of the manifesto, altered his views as they are expressed there. De Bouhélier published regular articles in *L'Evénement* – the same paper to which Céard frequently contributed in the same period – between early 1897 and early 1898. His column was cancelled as a result of his increasing affirmations of Alfred Dreyfus' innocence, which the editors deemed incompatible with *L'Evénement*'s audience.[376]

On the 23rd of February, 1897, the naturist published an article in the paper entitled 'Sur la Tyrannie de l'Esprit Allemand'. As its name suggests, the piece repeats many of the same charges levelled against foreign art, particularly that of Wagner, found in the 'Manifeste du Naturisme'. Among the counterexamples opposed to the author of the *Nibelungenlied* is the premiere of *Messidor*, an opera by Alfred Bruneau for which Zola was the librettist. Its liberating power is exalted by de Bouhélier: "certes, si les exploits qui ont lieu dans un ordre intellectuel ne sont pas moins importants, pour la santé et la réputation d'un peuple, que les entreprises civiques, les guerres, les actions militaires, peut-être n'est-il pas excessif de célébrer la

[375] In browsing the issues of the *Revue Naturiste* that the naturists published during the late 1890s (for more details, see Day, *Saint-Georges de Bouhélier's* Naturisme, pp. 4-5), a corollary of de Bouhélier's aesthetic views on nature appears.
[376] Day, *Saint-Georges de Bouhélier's* Naturisme, p.75.

représentation de *Messidor*, comme un spectacle de renaissance, d'affranchissement spirituel."[377] The article thus shares many of the same concerns as 'Le Manifeste du Naturisme' – a rejection of foreign intellectual and cultural influence that is linked to geopolitical and military considerations, emphasis on the need to champion French artistic traditions and restore a glory, presented as having faded, to the French nation. However, despite the chronological and contextual proximity between the two texts - published a mere six weeks apart, in both cases in centre-right daily newspapers - two important differences stand out.

The first of these is the increased focus on theatre, and specifically opera, as an art form. Whereas the 'Manifeste', understandably given its advocacy of naturism as a poetic supersession of symbolism, had spoken of 'fêtes' in a general sense and discussed literature, painting and sculpture in its more aesthetically-oriented passages, 'Sur la Tyrannie de l'Esprit Allemand' speaks only of opera. The concept of the civic festival, present in an abstract sense in de Bouhélier's aesthetic treatises and in the 'Manifeste', becomes displaced and 'incarnated' in *Messidor*; "nous y avons assisté comme à une fête de la nation." The second difference with the manifesto is de Bouhélier's attempt to present and refute a counter-argument to his nationalist aesthetics.

> Je conçois assez le point de vue occupé par les partisans de la pensée allemande, italienne, scandinave. L'art, dit-on, n'a pas de patrie. C'est méconnaître assez singulièrement les nécessités nationales, l'histoire, la signification des écrivains. Car rien n'excuserait un homme dans l'instant où il se décide à choisir le métier des lettres ou à

[377] Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, *Les Eléments d'une Renaissance Française* (Paris: Bibliothèque Artistique et Littéraire, 1899), p. 62.

composer de brillantes sonates, - quand une foule de professions seraient beaucoup plus naturelles – s'il n'y était porté par l'amour de sa race, par l'inspiration qu'il y puise.[378]

Thus de Bouhélier rejects the notion of art transcending borders. The continuation of the paragraph mitigates the more extreme implication of such a thought by acknowledging that great writers encapsulate and transmit the spirit of their nations, both to their compatriots and to interested foreigners: "sans les poètes, sans les philosophes et sans les statuaires, aucun people ne connaîtrait l'autre…La fraternité des races et leur mutuelle pénétration, rien de mieux, en vérité. Mais comme c'est mal discerner leurs désirs, la fatalité de l'histoire, et qu'il est aussi dangereux de se laisser conquérir par la pensée de l'étranger, que par la puissance des armes."[379]

De Bouhélier's tragic notion of history crops up twice in the same paragraph, as an argument against the universalist view of art's freedom from political concerns. As with the 'Manifeste', there is a curious devaluing of the artistic enterprise in de Bouhélier's thought. Where the first text had presented poetry as a somewhat inadequate replacement for martial exploits, here the author implies that the choice of a creative career (over others which are 'beaucoup plus naturelles') would be inexcusable without a nationalist sentiment driving the individual to immortalize his fatherland's character. Thus the 'Manifeste du Naturisme', although displaying certain differences with de Bouhélier's other contemporaneous expressions of his thought, is essentially consistent with them. His nationalism is more than a transient or insincere trait, and without it naturist aesthetics cannot be understood.

To return to the 'Manifeste' itself, when de Bouhélier finally moves to the exposition of naturism's intrinsic traits, the presentation is inevitably hurried since he now has so little space in

[378] ibid. p.63.
[379] ibid. p.63.

which to express it, and resembles a pastiche of the earlier treatises. Phrases such as "les hautes fêtes de l'homme", "les poètes se mêleront aux tribus", and "tant de journaliers labeurs" succeed each other in a two-paragraph span. Interspersed with these are further, almost apologetic attempts to justify literary activity through the absence of a military alternative: "quand la paix règne sur la nation, nous ne pouvons qu'en décrire les délices, la joie auguste et le charme solennel." De Bouhélier concludes by listing some of the younger authors he sees as attuned to his aesthetics, notably including the "genie tendre et ardent d'une suavité passionnée", as he calls André Gide, along with Michel Abadie, Le Blond and Paul Fort, the first man to encourage de Bouhélier to write the 'Manifeste'. The article concludes in the following terms:

> Réveil de l'esprit national, culte de la terre et des héros, consécration des civiques énergies, voilà donc les sentiments qui constituent à la jeunesse contemporaine un caractère si singulier, si inattendu et admirable. Puisse-t-elle tenir ses promesses afin que nous assistions au spectacle fortifiant d'une renaissance française !

As could be expected given the tone of the manifesto, its final words make no mention of the literary characteristics of the movement for which it was intended to advocate, returning instead to the notions of national tradition and community which naturism professed to fortify. The phrase "culte de la terre et des héros" appearing in de Bouhélier's writing in 1897, over two years before Barrès' 1899 "la terre et les morts" speech to the Ligue de la Patrie Française, sheds new light on the mentality from which Barrès was drawing his ideas. It is clear that, even among idealistic young men, a tag de Bouhélier could not plausibly be denied, a trend of looking to the soil of France, and past generations of Frenchmen, for identity construction was widespread.

For de Bouhélier's own career, the final mention of "une renaissance française" is no less significant. Two years after the 'Manifeste', in other words contemporaneously to Barrès' militancy and as the Dreyfus Affair continued to rage, with Dreyfus returning to France for retrial, de Bouhélier collected an appropriate selection of his journalism in a volume entitled *Les Eléments d'une Renaissance Française*: the collection consists of articles having originally appeared in *L'Evénement* over the previous two years, from the publication of the 'Manifeste du Naturisme' onwards. The final words of the manifesto thus clearly announce the direction de Bouhélier's thought would take.

Such was, then, the situation of naturist thought when the Dreyfus Affair escalated in late 1897. Before turning to de Bouhélier's pamphlet on the Affair, *La Révolution en Marche* (with a title calqued directly on Zola's famous phrase "la vérité est en marche, et rien ne l'arrêtera"), the sequence of events that led to his espousal of the Dreyfusard cause must be retraced. In the light of the xenophobic nationalism displayed even before the Affair by both Le Blond and de Bouhélier, comfortably exceeding that of a staunch anti-Dreyfusard such as Céard, the nature of those events takes on heightened importance.

Taking into account the tenor of de Bouhélier's views and his immense personal and artistic affection for Zola, it is no surprise to learn that the younger author was initially uncertain, perhaps antagonistic, in his views on the Dreyfusards and their goals, but that Zola was able to persuade him to rally to it. Zola and de Bouhélier's personal relationship began in late 1896; it was then that "Bouhélier visited Médan and brought with him a copy of his newly published

novel, *L'hiver en Méditation*, for Zola to read."[380] As previously stated, Zola's urgings were responsible for the publication of the 'Manifeste du Naturisme', although Paul Fort and Barrès had already encouraged de Bouhélier to write such an article. The naturists' sympathy for Zola and his writing, coupled with the encouragement Zola took from discovering a group of young writers who did not reject his oeuvre as the symbolists had, established a mutual affection between the two men, which would continue until Zola's death: when a banquet was held in de Bouhélier's honour in 1901, Zola wrote to excuse his absence while affirming that "je suis de tout coeur avec vous pour fêter un jeune talent dont le bel enthousiasme et dont la force vivante me ravissent."[381]

Yet this affection did not in itself suffice to sway de Bouhélier's views on the Dreyfus Affair. These can be discerned from a curious pairing of sources; the articles and pamphlets the young author wrote in immediate response to the developments of late 1897 and of 1898, and his memoirs, written almost half a century after the fact.[382] In the latter, de Bouhélier describes his initial reluctance to acknowledge the validity of the Dreyfusard campaign along both of the two principal axes of anti-Dreyfusard thought: the prioritization of national over individual interests, and personal anti-Semitism. Of Dreyfus himself, de Bouhélier writes: "raciste dans le fond de l'âme, je le jugeais fort blameable."[383] He also uses a literary exemplar to justify his initial

[380] Day, *Saint-Georges de Bouhélier's* Naturisme, p.9.
[381] ibid., p.71; quoted from *La Revue Naturiste*, May the 15th, 1901.
[382] De Bouhélier died, aged 70, in 1947; he had reflected on his life and times in *Le Printemps d'une Génération*, the previous year, as well as in *Introduction à la Vie de Grandeur* (1942). In common with many memoirs written by those involved in the Affair, the great chronological gap between events and their written discussion compels care in their reading.
[383] Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, *Le Printemps d'une Génération* (Paris: Nagel,1946), p.196.

nationalism, stating that "je n'étais pas loin de penser comme Goethe que, même au prix d'une injustice, mieux vaut l'ordre d'un pays !"[384]

Two of his *L'Evénement* articles from 1897 both corroborate and substantiate this later recollection of de Bouhélier's hostility to the individual. His piece of December the 8th, 'La Vertu et les Hommes', written in response to the escalation of unrest and the proliferation of details surrounding the Affair, laments the alleged individualism of those on the Dreyfusard side and the damage done to France's national integrity. The tone of the condemnation is surprisingly strong, given that the esteemed Zola had become one of those active in press interventions in the Affair with his article of 11 days before, 'M. Scheurer-Kestner', and its swift follow-up, 'Le Syndicat'. "On distingue que quelques auteurs agitent dans nos gazettes les plus basses passions…et font le plus grand mal aux institutions du pays." However, unlike Céard, who begins to write on the Affair in the same newspaper almost at the same time, de Bouhélier holds out some hope for positive consequences to emerge from the disturbances: "de cette passion dévorante, désordonnée et confuse qui règne aujourd'hui en France, il restera peut-être un gout plus assidu de la patrie et un sentiment plus exact de la justice et de l'ordre."[385]

It is clear that de Bouhélier must be operating a distinction between those seen as writing on the Affair to manipulate public opinion and increase their sales, and those, like Zola, he sees as defending a more dearly-cherished cause. Zola, as an occasional contributor to *Le Figaro* who had taken up his pen specifically to advocate for Dreyfus' retrial or release, was playing a very different role to that of, say, Drumont or Rochefort, both of whom were the editors of their respective newspapers (*La Libre Parole* and *L'Intransigeant*) and who depended on their success

[384] ibid., p.195.
[385] *Les Eléments d'une Renaissance Française,* p.167-8.

there for reputation and influence. It is also significant that, at this stage, de Bouhélier's hopes concerning the Affair bear on justice and order, reflecting his position in between the Dreyfusards under Zola's banner of 'Vérité et Justice' and the authoritarian leanings of the anti-Dreyfusard majority.

The article then shifts to an evocation of the importance of dead heroes more substantial than the allusion thereto in the ‘Manifeste’:

> Ce qui renforce une nation et dans une nation chaque individu, c’est la pensée que des frontières ne renferment pas simplement un troupeau d’hommes réunis, mais une terre faite de la poussière des héros morts, des monuments particuliers et pleins de trésors nationaux…c’est enfin le sentiment qu’en défendant le territoire de son pays, chacun défend son domaine propre, qui est pour le laboureur un champ de blé et de luzerne, et pour le philosophe les émotions que seuls pourraient lui inspirer ces luzernes, ce champ et ce blé.

The transmutation of de Bouhélier’s naturist aesthetics into nationalist politics continues: the syzygy of peasant and thinker (in this case philosopher rather than the more usual poet) through their shared relationship to the earth, found in his aesthetic texts, reappears as the very basis of national sentiment – just as de Bouhélier had rejected a ‘borderless’ conception of art in ‘Sur la Tyrannie de l’Esprit Allemand’, here he asserts that only the specific land of his home country can inspire a philosopher to emotion. It need hardly be said that this idea becomes particularly incoherent with the substitution of philosopher for poet: very few philosophers could be said to rely on emotion rather than logic for their craft, nor does de Bouhélier offer any examples. But the attempt to express it testifies to the author’s increasing concern with

broadening the basic convictions of naturism, as a literary movement, into a conception of the French nation and the means of its restoration to validity.

The article also demonstrates specific features of de Bouhélier's thinking that mark him apart from other nationalist authors of the time, and that indicate the manner in which he was able to convert his convictions to Dreyfusism. The first is an aesthetic and moral discarding of the political process: "la patrie française, depuis vingt-cinq ans, n'a guère été le théâtre que des spectacles tout a fait inferieurs, représentés au Parlement. Est-ce donc avec des aventures comme le Panama et l'affaire Dreyfus que l'on peut soutenir une nation, dans son goût de la gloire, dans son ardeur vers la beauté et dans son harmonie même ?" De Bouhélier's growing preoccupation with the theatre shows through in his choice of metaphor, and the linking of 'gloire', 'beauté' and 'harmonie' indicates the interpenetration of aesthetic and political notions in the article.

In contrast, more overtly political columnists such as Barrès or Drumont used the Affair to increase their personal gains in the area (Drumont directly so, since he was elected as a deputy to the French parliament in Algiers in May 1898). Despite accumulating their own critiques of the parliamentary process and linking the scandal of the Affair to the still-fresh memory of the Panama company debacle, they could not gain currency by moving from such critiques to championing of the cause of a Jew convicted of treason, and associating themselves with men like Zola or Clemenceau. It was de Bouhélier's absence from the political scene that allowed him to overcome his personal anti-Semitism by concentrating on other aspects of the Affair, such as the glorification of Zola's role. Similarly, his aestheticism enabled the supersession of fears about the Affair's damage to French institutions with a fascination for the moral grandeur of defying a mob stirred by the unscrupulous demagogues of the press.

Other articles from *Les Eléments d'une Renaissance Française* mark out different, but equally important, features of de Bouhélier's blend of aestheticism and burgeoning political thought. A piece named 'Les fêtes de Bâle', for instance, presents itself as a travel narrative centring on a festival held in that town jointly to celebrate Holbein and Boecklin. However, de Bouhélier uses the two genres of description and art criticism that this format invokes to reiterate some of the tenets of his literary naturism, and also to reflect on the status of regionalism in art, and its relationship to the nation.

He begins by implicitly avowing his preference for natural over urban scenes: "au voyageur qui traverse Bâle, je conseillerai toujours de faire en premier lieu une visite à la cathédrale, non point pour y voir les statues, les sépulcres ou le portail peint, mais parce que c'est de cet endroit qu'on peut prendre la vue la plus nette du paysage étendu, de sa nature et même de son dessin." There follows a poetic description of the landscape produced by the Rhine's flow, in which the presence of human habitation is symbolically relegated: "au loin, dans le fond…s'étagent des maisons teintes…". The second section of the article begins with a parallel between the knowledge of the land this view offers, and the knowledge of its natives that erudition can bring.

> Si, du haut de la cathédrale, on peut se constituer une vue du pays tout entier…il faut se rendre à la *Bibliothèque* pour voir de quelle manière une race trace d'elle-même un portrait précis…quel usage, enfin, font les grand artistes régionaux de cette splendide matière première dont nous venons de contempler le chaos naturel et harmonieux. (author's italics)

As in *La Vie Héroïque*, then, the land and its people exist in synergy, and cannot be understood apart from each other. However, the latter have become more preponderant in the analysis, and the description of nature with which de Bouhélier begins serves as a frame for the much lengthier discussion of the two artists and their significance. In fact, the article serves chiefly to praise Boecklin, and to decry his obscurity in France compared to the German lands. The grounds for this praise are the life and power with which de Bouhélier sees the painter as investing his subjects, and his fidelity to his country's natural character: "de sa patrie naturelle Boecklin a reproduit le vigoureux éclat…Ce peintre sait le secret des pierres, et quel pur mystère voile les elements." He ends with a lament that France does not honour its great artists (in the broader sense) to the same extent as Basel:

> Glorifier ses grands hommes de leur vivant même,[386] décréter l'allégresse publique pour honorer le génie, rien de plus beau, de plus légitime, de plus grand. Quels sentiments sont capables d'inspirer aux jeunes étudiants bâlois cette reconnaissance nationale…Mais, ici, en France, essayez donc de célébrer les hommes de qui les travaux contribuent, sans cesse, à accroitre la gloire nationale et la puissance morale de leurs compatriotes.

The upholding of creators as national heroes is, as has been illustrated, nothing new in de Bouhélier's writing, but the allusion to the importance of the Basel region in Boecklin's work and the reception given to it locally invite consideration of the critic's attitude to regionalism within French culture. De Bouhélier was associated, throughout the 1890s, with poets such as Joachim Gasquet, a resident of Aix-en-Provence and friend of Charles Maurras. Gasquet was one of the contributors, in November 1897,[387] to a special issue of the literary journal *La Plume*

[386] Boecklin died in 1901.
[387] The issue is dated the 1st of that month.

devoted to naturism. Many of the principles he exposed there match de Bouhélier's; Patrick Day observes that "Gasquet, like Bouhélier, also foresees a literary renaissance and believes that the principal element of naturisme is its insistence on the divine quality of all people."[388] Gasquet was, however, more aggressive than de Bouhélier or even Le Blond in excluding Christianity from the intellectual heritage of naturism. While Le Blond grudgingly conceded the Catholic tradition among those of France that it was naturism's duty to acknowledge in its poetics, and de Bouhélier seems to have avoided speaking about organized religion, Gasquet asserted that "la France…ne sera belle et libre que lorsque, brisant les cadres étroits et malsains de la religion et de l'Etat, elle aura, dans l'unité naturelle…et vraiment morale, ordonné la vie indépendante et parfaite des groupements divers."[389]

It can be seen, then, that Gasquet's concern, like de Bouhélier's, was not for a purely literary renaissance; in fact, the above declarations make no mention of aesthetics or literature, speaking instead of 'groupements divers' and their proper administration by the state. The broader point in play in Gasquet's article is one of regionalism and its relationship to the French governmental apparatus. A comparison with Barres' and Maurras' views on the same question is illuminating. In all three cases, a distrust of the centralizing tendency of post-revolutionary France translates to an attempt to propose decentralized alternative forms of government. For Maurras, this is monarchy with greater autonomy accorded to the French provinces.

Gasquet intimates, in his article for *la Plume*, that his political sensibilities are in line with those of his friend, but he does so in the context of an aesthetic discussion. As he seeks to

[388] Day, *Saint-Georges de Bouhélier's* Naturisme, p.98.
[389] Joachim Gasquet, 'Notes pour Servir à l'Histoire du naturisme'. *La Plume*, no. 205 (Nov. 1, 1897). p.673.

draw a distinction between paganism and pantheism, he turns to what he sees as their political consequences:

> Le panthéisme est une religion profonde et large, mais confuse; son harmonie, malgre tout, demeure vague. Il peut conduire à l'affreuse notion de l'égalité de tout et de tous: en politique, de lui vient la démocratie; son art est le romantisme. Le paganisme est le panthéisme hiérarchisé ; il est aristocratique et sain. Le paganisme, dit très bien M. Charles Maurras, c'est d'être sage.[390]

Gasquet expresses his revulsion for democratic politics and sides with Maurras' 'wisdom' in promoting hierarchy over equality. Romanticism becomes a bedfellow of democracy in this vision, expanding on Gasquet's dismissive reference, earlier in the article, to "Lamartine et Hugo [qui] ont chanté la Marseillaise de la Paix; nous attendons des poètes vraiment nationaux." The political careers of the leading French Romantics become meshed with their writings as a target for differentiation.

It should also be remembered that Maurras was a friend and sympathizer of Frédéric Mistral, the Provencal poet, and his Félibrige movement. Félibrige, although primarily cultural in nature, also had a significant political dimension, with the younger Mistral militating for the independence of Provence and using the antiquity and accomplishments of the Occitan language as one basis for this. When Maurras used Félibrige meetings, along with the 'young Félibre' journal *L'Aioli*, to advance federalist theses in the early 1890s, Mistral appears at least partially to have supported the younger man's efforts. Julian Wright suggests that "Mistral was happy, it

[390] ibid., p.674.

seems, to see a 'politique provençale' grow out of the cultural renaissance he had proclaimed."[391] As for Barrès, his advocation of direct democracy, and critique of the alienating nature of centralized institutions through *Les Déracinés*, place him closer to Maurras and Gasquet than to the parliamentary rationalism of Republican orthodoxy in the period, but the breadth of regionalism as a concept prohibits excessive *rapprochements* without a more thorough examination than can be carried out here.[392]

How do these regionalist and federalist minglings of aesthetic and political ideas relate to the naturists, and to their eventual role in the Dreyfus Affair? A beginning of the answer lies in de Bouhélier's project to collect regional French literature in the pages of the *Revue Naturiste*. Michel Decaudin, in his *La Crise des Valeurs Symbolistes*, signals the flexibility of naturism as a doctrine as the root of its ability briefly to attract writers of all kinds in the mid-1890s; "on comprend enfin les raisons de l'engouement provoqué par les idées naturistes. Non seulement elles se présentaient en un système cohérent, mais elles apportaient une réponse aux questions les plus diverses qui étaient agitées dans la littérature contemporaine. Au traditionalisme de Maurras ou au provincialisme de Joachim Gasquet, elles offraient une nouvelle justification de l'esprit national en littérature…."[393]

But de Bouhélier went further than offering an abstract opportunity to identify with a system of values. The *Revue Naturiste* of the 25th of February, 1898 (which also carried a

[391] Julian Wright, *The Regionalist Movement in France, 1890-1914* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003), p. 47. See also Victor Nguyen, 'Maurras et le Félibrige', *La France Latine*, 1978-1980 (3 parts), on Maurras.
[392] Sternhell argues against a characterization of Barrès as federalist: "[Le] nationalisme barrésien …tout en percevant de chaque province la physionomie très particulière, en souligne toujours l'accord profond avec le génie national…Il n'est donc pas question de régionalisme ». (*Maurice Barrès et le Nationalisme Français*, p.35)
[393] Michel Décaudin, *La Crise des Valeurs Symbolistes* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1981), p.66.

declaration of support for Zola's actions in defence of Dreyfus[394]), contained the following project. "Elle se proposait de réunir 'dans toutes les provinces tous les écrivains de la dernière génération' et de devenir 'leur organe central' ; des pages seraient réservées dans chaque livraison aux écrivains de Provence, du Languedoc, de Lorraine et des rédacteurs en chef étaient désignés pour chacune de ces sections."[395]

However, this project not only failed in its own right, but the organizational difficulties inherent in the attempt meant that the *Revue* itself ceased to appear entirely for almost two years, its publication restarting in December 1899. Nevertheless, it is plain that de Bouhélier and Le Blond's sympathy for the soil was not only open to, but in fact entailed a movement towards, a regionalist approach to literature which was one of their main points of contact with Gasquet and Maurras. As such, their Dreyfusism becomes still more uneasy. In the cases of both the authors just mentioned, the marriage of their regionalism and nationalism led them to reject agitation (which was confined largely to Paris – there were few Dreyfusards in the provinces outside major universities such as Lyon and Bordeaux[396]) carried out principally by officials of the Republican university, or by what many on the right called 'Juifs d'Etat' such as Joseph Reinach. Anti-Semitism was a central component of such opposition. But opposition to the Republican institutions in which most leading Dreyfusards had either been trained or were then employed was another crucial part of regionalist objections to the campaign for revision of Dreyfus' trial.

---

[394] "Un maitre illustre a été condamné par le plus prodigieux des gouvernements. Emile Zola, pour prix de son courage et de ses hauts travaux intellectuels, méritait la gloire du laurier civique. Mais la prison sera sa récompense…La postérité couronnera du double rameau de la gloire le grand poète et le grand citoyen que bâillonne, qu'emprisonne et qu'outrage notre époque." (cited in Day, p. 75) Poet and citizen; the aesthetic and political sides of Zola were as one for his young admirers in the Dreyfus Affair.

[395] Décaudin, *La Crise des valeurs symbolistes*, p.82. Gasquet was slated to fill the editor-in-chief's role for Provence.

[396] Charle puts it straightforwardly: "le dreyfusisme est en situation de faiblesse en province" (*La Naissance des Intellectuels*, p.188). As a result, a large university corps was needed in a provincial centre to enable a collective Dreyfusard mobilization.

With so many affinities between the thought of de Bouhélier and a contemporary such as Maurras, it might seem that only the former's veneration of Zola as a mentor and creator was responsible for his adopting the opposite side to the future leader of l'Action Francaise in the Affair. This is certainly how de Bouhélier himself presents it in his 1946 memoirs: "C'est donc pour avoir écouté Zola plutôt que par pure conviction que je me suis engagé dans l'Affaire Dreyfus."[397] He describes a meeting with Zola, whose "mains fines, énervées ne cessaient de remuer", at which the older man swayed the younger by force of character and affirmation of having seen the proof of Dreyfus' innocence.

But to agree with the older de Bouhélier would be a mistake, as is evident from a reading of two of his texts published, one in November 1897, the other in February 1898. The former is his contribution to the aforementioned edition of *La Plume* on naturism, 'La Révolution comme origine et comme fin du naturisme', the latter his Dreyfusard pamphlet *La Révolution en Marche*.

In the *La Plume* piece, de Bouhélier begins by flouting his title and proposing a *captatio benevolentiae* centring around his amenability to his contemporaries, and the intellectual trajectory that led him to elaborate naturism as a doctrine. The following phrases are typical: "A mon désordre intérieur, né évidemment du caractère trop pénétrable et comme poreux de mon esprit, j'opposais l'équilibre de la nature, et je résolus de la mettre en moi. Bientôt la terre vint m'instruire."[398] The article thus initially appears to be the polar opposite of the 'Manifeste du naturisme' of 10 months before; although bearing a political title, its early passages are entirely aesthetic and biographical in nature, where the expected aesthetic developments of the

[397] *Le Printemps d'une Génération*, p.199.
[398] *La Plume* (Nov. 1, 1897), p.652.

'Manifeste' had found themselves replaced by jingoistic assertions of Frenchness and its significance to art.

It is clear that the growing controversy surrounding naturism had, in the intervening months, influenced de Bouhélier's rhetoric. Less than two months after the 'Manifeste du Naturisme' had appeared in *Le Figaro*, the same paper carried a protest, signed by 26 authors, rejecting "toute étiquette."[399] As de Bouhélier and, more viciously, Le Blond had attacked symbolism and attempted to draw rising authors into their own orbits, a reaction was generated, of which the *Figaro* protestation is the most ringing example. The *La Plume* article thus sees de Bouhélier move toward a more conciliatory and personal tone, in an effort to reassure those authors and critics who had begun to see naturism as simply another dogmatic school attempting to replace symbolism's precepts with its own.

Over the course of the piece's first two sections the author moves the discussion away from his personal intellectual struggles toward the poet's goal in the modern world: "rendre à l'humanité son héroïque beauté, éclairer d'une forte lueur sa place dans le monde, telle est la mission du poète actuel." What is new in this article, compared to those discussed above, is that de Bouhélier now presents this poetic mission as merely his personal interpretation of the principles that the Revolution attempted to embody. He cites Hugo on the importance of the Revolution for the development of poetry in the 19th century, presenting the major authors of the previous hundred years as attempting to restore and complete the imperfect vision of 'la Beauté' that the Revolution offered.

[399] Day, *Saint-Georges de Bouhélier's* Naturisme, p.132.

The political figure to whom the young theorist chooses to liken himself is Robespierre. For de Bouhélier, what they share is an urge to build on the successes of their predecessors (Mirabeau and Desmoulins, on the one hand, Hugo and Zola, on the other) by completing their respective revolutions through a divine aspect. Thus de Bouhélier is one of the few figures of his time or any other to approve Robespierre's 'Fêtes de l'Etre Supreme', identifying himself and his peers with that period: "nous nous trouvons, nous jeunes gens de vingt ans, dans la même situation. Nous sommes à un tournant des âges. L'équilibre du monde se reconstitue. L'ordre établi dans nos poèmes précède seulement l'ordre naturel que nous imposerons aux nations."[400] He goes on to assert that, while in political terms the common people of France became equal to kings by 1793, "les muses ne les solennisent point. Les poètes n'ont pas accompli dans l'ordre de la poésie les mêmes exploits que la nation."

After citing his own earlier works at length, de Bouhélier concludes that:

> Ce culte de l'homme, nous l'avons mérité. Chacun le partage et y croit. Les fêtes de la Révolution nous en inspirent la pensée et le goût. Ces hautes actions étaient déjà des odes ; de mystérieuses lyres d'or ont tressailli, nous sommes prêts aux chants de consécration.

Thus the article (eventually) grows into its title; by singling out an extremely unusual aspect of the Revolution for his praise, the naturist asserts the continuity of the political events of a century before and his own aesthetic ideas. Indeed he goes on to relegate the aesthetic aspect of naturism behind its moral status, one accessible to all his contemporaries:

---

[400] *La Plume* (Nov. 1, 1897), p.654.

> Ce qu'on appelle le Naturisme est bien plus une morale qu'une doctrine d'art. Du moins, les sentiments que les lettres inspirent à l'auteur et à ses amis peut-être également, les sentiments demeurent plutôt l'effet, la conséquence d'une révolution intérieure (commune a tous les hommes contemporains) que d'une méditation privée et solitaire sur un système.

So, although de Bouhélier claims naturism is a moral idea, he is at pains once more to stress its inclusivity and accessibility, and to distance it from the charge of being a system whose abstractions would dictate to others how to think. One can also see in this foregrounding of ethics a reminiscence of Zola's defences of naturalism, in which the moral character of his writing was asserted as a prophylactic against rising antagonism in the literary field.

The article ends on a warning: once the people have been raised, by naturist poetry, to consciousness of their inherent valour and virtue, their "esclavage" will become unbearable to them. "Malheur aux peuples qui se rendent compte de l'abjection de leur vie, en assistant à des drames tragiques et pompeux ! Malheur aux peuples qui virent l'éternelle perfection des formes représentées par les poètes ! Afin de leur permettre de vivre, ils détruiront les lois présentes."[401] De Bouhélier's thought appeals to notions of the microcosm and macrocosm as he states that

> Toute injustice commise contre un héros, retombera en mal sur l'humanité. Le châtiment des nations qui persécutent les grand hommes, c'est d'être à leur tour atteintes par l'épouvante, par la mélancolie et par les haines qui les frappèrent. Marat et Robespierre vengent J.-J. Rousseau des calamités subies. La Révolution française parait être à la fois un exploit national et l'action d'un individu.

[401] ibid.. p.657.

It is clear, then, that the younger author was primed to take Zola's side in the Dreyfus Affair for this very reason. Zola, already lauded by de Bouhélier as one of the heroes of the Republic, would be confirmed in this status by the reprisals launched against him following 'J'Accuse...!'.

At least as significant, however, are the reasons for which de Bouhélier was so enthusiastic regarding the Revolution in the first place, particularly given the already-discussed similarities between his thought and the provincially-minded Gasquet's. The difference appears to lie in their attitudes toward the Republic, which in turn are conditioned by the slight divergence within their aesthetic views. The pressure of the Dreyfus Affair magnified these small differences into a gap large enough for the two poets to fall on opposite sides of the divide in 1898. Although both see the common people as the source of poetic and political vigour, for Gasquet, following Maurras, allowing them actually to govern or determine the course of political events is a prospect that undermines national stability. De Bouhélier, on the other hand, is less focused on the issue of stability, and shows sympathy for the concept of revolution as a means of overturning a failed order. However, on both sides and particularly in de Bouhélier's case, the level of political thought is less than profound. It is this that makes an aesthetic approach to its analysis essential: de Bouhélier's article for *La Plume* reveals the primordiality of his aesthetics, with the unusual choice to praise Robespierre's Fêtes de l'Etre Suprême stemming from the similarity de Bouhélier identifies between those rites and the poetic portraits he was himself painting of common folk.

Confirmation of these differences with a Gasquet can be found in de Bouhélier's text 'La Révolution en Marche', published by Stock on the 7th of February 1898, to coincide with the

opening day of Zola's trial. As previously indicated, de Bouhélier was initially reluctant to acknowledge the validity of the Dreyfusard position, and only personal persuasion from Zola succeeded in swaying him: "A cette époque, je n'étais qu'émotivité et exaltation."[402]

There can little doubt as to de Bouhélier's 'émotivité'. However, a reading of the pamphlet he produced to support Zola indicates that far more than youthful enthusiasm was at work. De Bouhélier uses elements of his earlier writings in the new context of Affair, producing an argument that stands in a natural progression from the works discussed above. True to the later self-portrait of *Le Printemps d'une Génération*, he avoids discussion of Alfred Dreyfus himself, or of the legality of the 1894 case. Only at the end of the pamphlet is there a cursory reference to them: "un fait assez minime en soi décida la campagne actuelle: un cas de justice militaire qu'on aurait dû réviser : Sans grand scandale, on aurait pu le faire."[403]

No matter the biographical explanation for the absence, it is still remarkable to encounter a Dreyfusard pamphlet that essentially ignores the Dreyfus case. Instead, its author concentrates on Zola's treatment at the hands of the authorities, and what this says about modern France. De Bouhélier uses his existing ideas on the heroism of ordinary men, and of the importance of artists to national pride and strength, to paint Zola's legal travails as a symptom of the illegitimacy of the current government.

He begins by setting up an opposition between the government and the will of people, using the earlier examples of Mirabeau in 1789 and the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 to argue

[402] Cited in Day, *Saint-Georges de Bouhélier's* Naturisme, p.74.
[403] Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, *La Révolution en Marche* (Paris: Stock, 1898), p.34. Pierre-Victor Stock (1861-1943) was the most enthusiastic Dreyfusard publisher during the Affair, putting over 150 titles on sale, and later in life produced his own *Mémorandum d'un Editeur* on the crisis.

that such events are a natural consequence of the people's voice not being acknowledged. Current events mirror these earlier times, he claims:

> Le gouvernement de la République s'oppose depuis trois mois au peuple. Les représentants du peuple ne sont point les démagogues, ce sont les directeurs de la pensée humaine, ce sont les héros, ce sont les poètes. Emile Zola, Clemenceau, Louis Havet, Michel Bréal, Jaurès, Duclaux, voilà les hommes qui expriment la nation, car ils portent l'avenir de la race. Leur volonté n'est pas entendue de l'Etat. Une Révolution se prépare. Elle aura lieu.[404]

In her analysis of the rise of the intellectual in France in this period, Venita Datta has argued that "the literary avant-garde played a key role in the emergence of the intellectual...almost all of them disdained the newly founded Third Republic, a regime which they viewed as both corrupt and inefficient."[405] The above attack on the government is evidence of de Bouhélier's personal disdain for its institutions; it was 'La République' as an ideal, rather than 'La Troisième République', for which he reserved his affection. The story of de Bouhélier's Dreyfusism, which Datta omits from her study, serves to confirm one of her central claims, that "Dreyfusard and anti-Dreyfusard intellectuals shared common values that put them at odds with themselves and the prevailing political, social and cultural structures of their time."[406] Because of these commonalities, de Bouhélier was able to navigate between the ideological markers of each camp and create a distinctive Dreyfusism that stayed silent on what he could not explicitly endorse. His analysis, however, contains a clear factual error (one of which de Bouhélier was

---

[404] *La Révolution en Marche*, p.3.
[405] Venita Datta, *Birth of a National Icon: the Literary Avant-Garde and the Origins of the Intellectual in France* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), pp.206-8.
[406] ibid., p.207.

certainly aware): the leading Dreyfusards could in no way be said to represent the will of the people in February 1898. French opinion was primarily anti-Dreyfusard, and would continue to be so until at least the late summer of that year, or indeed until Dreyfus' pardon in September 1899.

It is, then, a modification of de Bouhélier's views, as expressed in the aesthetic treatises, on the interrelation of people and poet that dictates the form taken by his Dreyfusism. Because only Zola, of the men de Bouhélier cites, was principally a writer, he widens his conception with respect to the earlier, abstract praise of the poet and includes authors within the broader group of 'directeurs de la pensée humaine' leading the Dreyfusard cause. However, in both cases the core relation is the same; public intellectuals, like poets, derive their authority from the measure in which they express the will and the sentiments of the people. As has been seen, even before the escalation of the Affair, the threat of revolution if the people's will and dignity are not respected is central to the argument of 'La Révolution comme fin et origine du naturisme'. [407] Unwittingly, the young author had moved his thought into the political domain just in time to comment on the Dreyfus Affair.

The emerging category of the intellectual was thus conceived by de Bouhélier very differently to those on either side of the crisis who succeeded in influencing its conception. The abstract, universal values and method of thought championed by someone like Emile Duclaux, the chemist who responded to Brunetière's attack on the intellectuals, are completely absent in *La Révolution en Marche*. Instead, a fantasy of popular will expressed by the intellectual is invoked, even though no such will exists. Lest this be dismissed as simple error, it must be remembered

[407] Thus de Bouhélier cannot have had the Affair in mind when writing: even though November 1897 immediately precedes Zola's involvement, this was so suddenly and unexpectedly undertaken that de Bouhélier cannot have guessed at it.

that such fictions were an essential part of both Dreyfusard and anti-Dreyfusard discourse on the Affair. As Zola mistakenly charged Du Paty de Clam with being the grand conspirator who had orchestrated the whole of Dreyfus' ordeal, so Maurras would respond with the so-called 'faux patriotique' that could explain Henry's forgeries and even his suicide. De Bouhélier's abortive notion of the intellectual takes its place alongside these, but because its subject-matter still survives today, it gains added piquancy.

De Bouhélier navigates between nationalism and opposition to ‘les tribuns du peuple’, as he calls journalists such as Cassagnac, Barrès and Rochefort, all of whom were prominent in the battle for public opinion at the time (Cassagnac, however, unlike the other two, entertained some doubts as to Dreyfus’ innocence and was one of the few anti-Dreyfusards to welcome revision). De Bouhélier himself acknowledges that these opinions are ‘des intérêts si divers’, but links them all to the government, as the foundation of its strength. Again, this view is at odds with reality; Cassagnac was an ardent Bonapartist and no lover of the parliamentary Republic, Barrès’ views were in full evolution but could at no point be said to have strong links to the government, and Rochefort was a left-wing populist who derived much of his impact from writing against those in power. De Bouhélier makes this implausible move in order to try and reclaim the concepts of tradition and ‘race’ from the men he names: "le devoir d’un bon patriote n’est point d’appuyer son gouvernement, qui est provisoire, éphémère, changeant, mais l’ordre essentiel de sa race, c’est-à-dire son esprit, ses traditions."[408]

In other words, he uses rhetoric similar to that of a Déroulède, evoking the national spirit in opposition to governmental authority, but for rather than against Dreyfus. Although this attempt to articulate a nationalist Dreyfusism is consistent with de Bouhélier’s vision of

[408] *La Révolution en Marche*, pp.5-6.

literature, it fails to convince in its appreciation of the contemporary political scene, and it is thus no surprise that his political intervention seems to have had far less impact than his aesthetics. *La Révolution en Marche* is, however, striking in its hybridity, as it combines references to 'la Liberté de l'Homme' with the paeans to racial essentialism already evoked. De Bouhélier's evolution, taken in conjunction with, notably, Barrès' move in the opposite ideological direction, stands as a document of the extreme fluidity of thought that the Affair would contribute to ossifying. While the dividing lines between the sides can appear abyssal with historical distance, in the daily reality of 1898 they were in constant motion and the transition from naturism to Dreyfusism underlines that fact.

As he had a year earlier in the 'Manifeste du Naturisme', de Bouhélier places war and its victories alongside poetry and philosophy as the glories that are lacking from the France of his time. "Vraiment, cette pauvreté de gloire est la plus grande tare de la République…Point de guerre, point d'exemple de pure vertu, point de querelles philosophiques, point de mouvements de pensée… " His impracticality immediately manifests itself again, however, as he goes on to complain about the defence budget impinging on the government's spending power, indicating that he would have liked to see a war in which France's military were less well-funded – in such circumstances it is unclear how much glory they would have been able to conquer. But the more substantive point in this section relates to the educational reforms that had been one of Republican government's principal achievements over the previous 20 years. De Bouhélier is categorically opposed to them, and draws from his knowledge of his peers in expressing his opposition.

> Ce qui demeure redoutable, c'est la déviation des esprits que cette réforme a provoquée, c'est la confusion des classes qui en a été l'effet, c'est l'augmentation des prolétaires et

> des réfractaires diplômés qui s'est accomplie rapidement…L'esprit de la Révolution n'a pas été compris le moins du monde des hommes qui s'en croyaient davantage pénétrés.[409]

Having seen what de Bouhélier thought 'l'esprit de la Révolution' to be (namely peasants dressed as trees), it could be considered amusing that he would reproach others for misunderstanding it. But more revealing is his disapproval of the 'confusion des classes' he identifies as a consequence of the free secular education put in place by the Ferry laws of the early 1880s. De Bouhélier was part of the first generation of young French people who grew up in the system these laws instituted. His aesthetic praise of the common man thus reveals its limits in his political writing: simple folk are to be exalted in literature, but not be educated alongside noble or bourgeois children.

I have alluded to points of contact between de Bouhélier's thought and the views of bona fide far-right nationalists such as Maurras and Barrès. In this case the contact seems to have been direct and intertextual. In chapter V of Barrès' novel *Les Déracinés*, which had been published the previous year and almost certainly read by de Bouhélier,[410] he uses the phrase "un prolétariat de bâcheliers", and was so fond of the term that he self-cited in his post-Dreyfus Affair magnum opus of nationalism, *Scènes et Doctrines du Nationalisme*.[411] Barrès was, at that very moment in early 1898, moving at full speed towards leadership of the anti-Dreyfusard cause, having derided 'La Protestation des Intellectuels' signed by figures such as Zola and de Bouhélier himself in an article in *Le Journal* that appeared just days before *La Révolution en Marche*. Barrès, indeed, represents conservative thought as a whole in this period, which repeatedly denounced the

[409] ibid., p.9.
[410] Beyond the fact that the two men were on friendly terms, a new novel by Barrès was a major event and de Bouhélier would not have spurned it.
[411] Maurice Barrès, *Scènes et Doctrines du Nationalisme* (Paris: Félix Juven, 1902), p.57. Ironically, Barrès credits Bismarck with the origin of the term!

problem of academic overproduction: Charle, paraphrasing the historian Roger Chartier, notes that "le thème de la surproduction des diplômés était consubstantiel à la pensée conservatrice."[412]

And yet de Bouhélier finds himself using the selfsame concept with which his counterpart had bolstered a critique of the intellectuals to argue in favour of them. Aesthetics was a rich resource for authors' political writing in the Affair for this very reason; ideas could be reoriented with extreme fluidity towards new goals precisely because their starting-point was at a remove from the political sphere. Furthermore, in de Bouhélier's idiosyncratic early conception of the intellectual, one can see an explicit avowal of the very thing with which Brunetière and Barrès were charging Zola and friends; an intellectual elitism that reserved the right to speak on matters of national interest to a specific cadre of thinkers. For de Bouhélier, however, this group was not defined by the autonomy or critical method invoked by Duclaux,[413] but by the channelling of a popular will and mind.

One can draw a parallel between de Bouhélier's view of the proletariat and his opinion on feminism. The July 1897 issue of the *Revue Naturiste* had featured a 'Petite Enquête sur le Féminisme', which despite its name canvassed an impressive range of prominent authors (including Zola, Barrès and Rachilde, along of course with de Bouhélier and Le Blond themselves) and published their views, occupying almost 40 pages of the issue. However, the 'Enquête''s stated goal, expressed in an editorial note placed after the individual contributions,

[412] Charle, *La Naissance des 'Intellectuels'*, p.59. Chartier himself traces this fear of an excess of the university-educated back to the elites of the 17th century, and comments "Il est clair que le motif de l'excès d'intellectuels s'inscrit dans le temps très long d'une conception fixiste des hiérarchies sociales et d'une conception monopoliste de l'appropriation du savoir". Roger Chartier, 'Espace social et imaginaire social: les intellectuels frustrés au XVIIe siècle', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 37. 2 (Mar. - Apr., 1982), p.399.

[413] Emile Duclaux, *Avant le Procès* (Paris: Stock, 1898). "Ce qui les [*the sciences*] fait grandes...c'est que l'esprit y a plus de liberté et d'indépendance qu'ailleurs.." (p.26)

was not to explain or approve the feminist movement, but to 'prove' its invalidity through the perspectives presented:

> Comme on vient de le voir, la très grand majorité des répondants...considère qu'il faut conserver à la femme sa fonction, et que les voies où tendraient à l'engager les théories féministes, sont funestes et impraticables, étant opposées à celles mêmes de la nature. Voilà ce que nous voulions démontrer.[414]

De Bouhélier's own argument regarding feminism is internally coherent, if idiosyncratically bigoted. He proposes that women have, ever since poetry was first written, been its principal inspiration, because of the allegoric traits they possess: "pour moi j'aime une jeune femme comme l'eau et la terre, comme j'ai chéri l'antique Cérès au temps où la nature était sacrée. Comprenez donc, je vous en prie, que je vous aime parce que vous êtes pour moi toute la Beauté, toute la Bonté, toute la Mélancolie et tout l'Espoir." Poets need women to access and understand nature; it is women's lack of education that gives them the simplicity to represent these categories : "Si les femmes s'intéressent aux grandes idées du monde, à Darwin et à Hegel, si elles délaissent le soin des hommes et des oiseaux, si elles cessent de s'occuper à des travaux de ménage, si elles perdent leur innocence, voilà disparu à jamais tout un univers de grâce, de simplicité, de naïve ardeur."[415] If women lose these traits, poetry will, by extension, lose them too: "Que nous restera-t-il? Comment ne pas oublier la nature!" And de Bouhélier concludes on an aesthetically reactionary note : "Peut-être, la femme future, dans un siècle ou deux, sera-t-elle aussi admirable qu'autrefois. A présent nous ne voyons pas son équilibre. Elle offense toutes nos conceptions de la beauté et de l'amour."

---

[414] *La Revue Naturiste*, July 1897, p.242.
[415] ibid., p.212.

De Bouhélier's ideas, lest their form distract us, are structured as a deduction of political views from an aesthetic. The author proceeds syllogistically in a manner consistent with his literary focus on nature and simplicity. This focus is spun into a rejection of progressive trends towards emancipation and equality between the sexes, just as, a few months later, the author comes to reject the extension of rights to the proletariat, again in the educational sphere. In both cases, the young critic's essentialism emerges: he glorifies the supposedly natural roles played by women and workers, and sees educational reforms as an attack on those roles, distorting and confusing the social order. Where a conservative Catholic of the time might have arrived at similar views from political and theological premises, de Bouhélier places aesthetics first, with 'gloire', be it military or poetic, the ideal with respect to which his judgements are formed. Stability or tradition per se are not his primary concerns, as they were for most bourgeois or aristocrats, but they are presented as necessary conditions for glory.

Stability through education, he claims, would best be achieved by tailoring education to the background and class of the student, rather than through the universal system enacted by the Third Republic. The educated rabble produced by the new system is painted as a breeding-ground for revolutionary sentiment: "quand le souffle effrayant de la Justice aura passé sur cette foule noire, horrible, hagarde, âpre et puissante, un écroulement profond se produira…L'élan de cette misérable et pesante masse de lettrés fera trembler sur leurs assises les institutions du gouvernement."[416] This vision of starving poets and downtrodden schoolteachers violently seizing power invites ridicule, but de Bouhélier's intent seems to be to draw on the very real and recent memory of the anarchist attacks which proliferated earlier in the decade and would continue to threaten Western powers for several more years. As had Le Blond in the *Essai sur le*

[416] *La Révolution en Marche*, p.10.

Naturisme, de Bouhélier ties the trend to the aesthetic state of play in contemporary France. His alternative involves such instruction as 'l'astronomie et le labour' for rural folk, along with fluid mechanics and shipbuilding for seafarers and, in another lurch toward self-parody, botany for bakers. "Par-dessus toute cette instruction différenciée et à tous les citoyens, on êut indistinctement donné des notions vivantes de respect, de courage et de vertu…La connaissance de l'alphabet n'étant point le fait principal de l'enseignement, on ne se fût pas cru apte à diriger le pays, à écrire des tragédies ou à bafouer un génie comme Zola, parce qu'on s'en fût trouvé muni."[417]

As he develops his argument, then, de Bouhélier becomes increasingly adamant that the classes are 'separate but equal' and that common folk with a veneer of education have no right to involve themselves in the affairs of government, or to insult intellectuals such as Zola. This is not strictly inconsistent with the views in the aesthetic treatises, but it profoundly modifies the impression those texts produced. When the subject was aesthetics alone, the poet appeared to be in almost a subordinate position to the common man, tasked only with transcribing and raising consciousness of the latter's divine essence. As Patrick Day has it, "the poet is, at best, equal to Everyman, because although he has been chosen to express images of life in words, he does not participate as fully in life's events as the average man and thus cannot attain the same epic stature."[418] In *La Révolution en Marche*, the restrictions are instead placed on working people themselves, stressing their fitness only for their traditional occupations, in much the same way de Bouhélier had recently argued women were fit only for celebration in verse, not for its creation (or any non-traditional activity). In turning his attention to the politics of the Dreyfus Affair, the naturist leader completes the recolouring of his thought in a reactionary and hierarchical light, its

[417] ibid., pp.10-11.
[418] Day, *Saint-Georges de Bouhélier's* Naturisme, p.29.

earlier appearance of progressiveness dispelled by the provisions apparent in the 'Enquête sur le Féminisme' and the Dreyfus Affair pamphlet.

Central to de Bouhélier's portrait of the Third Republic is the sense that the nation has fallen morally, and that the government's primary task should be to restore it to past glories. The means of doing so revolve around exaltation of distinguished scientists and men of letters, in keeping with his newly-advocated separation between the average citizen and the intellectual elite. Such a perspective of course overlooks the fact that a man like Zola was anything but to the manuscript born; having repeatedly failed to pass the baccalaureate, he had led the same impoverished and uncertain bohemian lifestyle in the 1860s that the younger man came to identify as a crucible for revolutionary activity. As a prolific journalist in the same period, Zola's polemics pushed the contemporary boundaries of censorship.

Yet de Bouhélier attributes the mob-like condemnation of his elder to precisely these two aspects of modern France: "on a vu un people, instruit des travaux de l'esprit humain, bafouer l'unique grand écrivain de cette époque, le plus magnifique, le plus courageux et le plus profond…Telle est la moralité que nous ont faite la licence de la presse et la mauvaise répartition de l'instruction."[419] Clearly, then, despite the effort to identify social causes for his diagnosis of French society's ills, what it truly rests on is the *a priori* conviction of the elite individual's superiority to the crowd. The term 'tourbe', inherited from the Latin 'turba' which denoted an unruly common mob, is recurrent in *La Révolution en Marche*, as is the idea that demagogues in the press and parliament are agitating the mob in question. "Toute la basse presse des

[419] *La Révolution en Marche*, p.13.

démagogues est en partie responsable des outrages criés dans les rues, par une tourbe de garçons bouchers et d'étudiants…"[420]

Along with the claimed moral decline of France, de Bouhélier taps into the fin-de-siècle preoccupation with race and degeneration, as had Le Blond when attacking Barrès two years earlier. "Si des flatteurs servent l'esprit de la populace, il existe, pourtant, des consciences qui se sacrifient totalement à la Beauté et à la gloire. Des hommes comme Zola, comme Duclaux, comme Louis Havet, comme Clémenceaux suffisent. La force de leur caractère et la vigueur de leur génie témoignent de la vitalité d'une race qui semble épuisée, corrompue."[421] Intellectuals are thus guarantors of the validity of the entire nation. De Bouhélier's aversion for Dreyfus transforms his engagement with the Affair into a discussion of its significance for the country as a whole, substituting Zola for Dreyfus as the wronged figure at its heart and suggesting macroscopic reasons for the behaviour of the French towards him and his Dreyfusard allies.

But he repeatedly contradicts himself, for instance by discarding the influence of anti-Dreyfusard 'demagogues' such as Rochefort and Cassagnac, and suggesting that only such morally elevated figures as Zola or Michel Bréal can inspire revolution, no matter where the present sympathies of the public might appear to lie. If this is so, it is hard understand how the mass of 'diplômés' evoked earlier could be any danger for the state, since only the lofty of mind and morals can truly spur them to action. The haste of the pamphlet's composition, and its tendentiousness, account for such inconsistencies. What renders it of interest is not its internal coherence, but the manner in which the aesthetics of naturism find themselves commuted into a political response to the crisis besetting France.

[420] ibid., p.14. The 'garçons bouchers' was a reference to the bully-boys of Jules Guérin's Ligue Antisémitique, who played a disproportionate role in the street agitation of the Affair and who often came from the ranks of the butchery trade.
[421] ibid., p.15.

Curiously, even de Bouhélier feels compelled to comment on Zola's seclusion, just as the five young naturalists of the 'Manifeste des Cinq' had in 1887, and just as Céard would do just a few weeks later in 1898. Of course, accusations of onanism are far from his mind, yet the young naturist is at pains to dispel the picture of Zola secluded in Médan and out of touch with his contemporaries: "Un homme pareil, quoiqu'il travaille dans un cabinet fermé, n'en est pas moins exposé aux yeux de toute la nation."[422] The solitude of Zola's existence (a convenient but disproportionate accusation for his adversaries, since the Zolas generally only spent the summer months in Médan and no-one else who could afford it remained in Paris at that time of year either) is thus addressed, to be quickly followed by the charge that he lacked a political conscience and was thus meddling in matters he did not comprehend. "Ce qui rend si redoutable l'opinion que de grands esprits se font de l'état d'un gouvernement, c'est justement leur solitude et leur sentiment d'équité…Au lieu de perdre peu à peu, au contact de la société, leur premier goût de la justice, ils le conservent dans leur cœur, qui le nourrira de tout."[423]

Modern society becomes ever more clearly defined, for de Bouhélier, as a breeding ground for degradation in which the mob both rules and is ruled by false values. Much like with Céard, his refusal to address Dreyfus' case directly (Céard would, as we have seen, eventually forsake this stance for stringent attacks on the ex-officer) produces a discourse in which the social chaos unleashed by the Affair plays the principal role, and in which seclusion away from this tumult becomes valorized. Where Céard wrote 'La Ville d'Alceste' as a playful plea for a place of tranquility away from Parisian ferment, de Bouhélier, on the other side of the debate, opts to show Zola's personal distance from the capital as a heroic stand, which has deepened his moral insight and preserved him from corruption. More than this, when intellectuals absent

[422] ibid., p.18.
[423] ibid., p.18.

themselves from the metropolis they come into closer contact with nature, and learn from its example the ethical lessons society is unable to offer: "Le spectacle de la nature, où tout s'équilibre et se coordonne, la vue de l'azur étoilé, la connaissance des idées éternelles, qui sont le fondement de la vie, tout rend plus solide leur pensée."[424]

Each time de Bouhélier reaches back toward his naturist writings, the ideas therein are modified further. In *La Vie Héroïque*, the poet's communion with nature was almost indirect, with greater emphasis placed on the spectacle of rural man performing his ancestral toil in its midst. The natural world itself occupied less prominent a place in those aesthetics than did its synergy with humankind. But in particularizing the Affair as a theatre for the structural failings of the Third Republic to be played out through the public's response to Zola, de Bouhélier is forced, when evoking nature, to strip it of precisely this synergistic potential, and to present it alone as an aid to Zola's superiority. Once more, the common man has been ousted in favour of the heroic intellectual, something de Bouhélier outlines with the maxim "l'élite entre en lutte avec la nation."[425] More particularly, by praising the category of the genius in abstract fashion, de Bouhélier sets up a contest between the army, often praised in similarly corporate terms as a reason for restraint and conformity, and the intellectuals, who man-for-man outclass such figures as General Mercier, he says.

The remainder of *La Révolution en Marche* moves away from reflections on the nature (in both senses) of the intellectual and into more general repetitions of the pamphlet's opening warnings of revolution, coupled with assertions that the culmination of the hopes of 1789 can only be achieved through erasure of the old system, not by timid modifications to it, which is

[424] ibid., p.18.
[425] ibid., p.20.

what de Bouhélier sees the Third Republic's achievements thus far as being. As he had in his article on 'La Révolution comme Origine et comme Fin du Naturisme' three months earlier, he approvingly evokes Robespierre's festivals, making almost complete abstraction of political reality in favour of building temples to various allegories, and to France's glorious dead, and imagining the people communing there: "sur le sommet d'une montagne, quand le printemps bénit le monde, un people étincelant de rameaux et chantant de solennelles odes, serait monté magnifiquement, vers le temple élevé à la sainte Justice, mère de la Beauté et mère de la paix !"[426]

The internal incoherences of *La Révolution en Marche* only make sense in the context of their author's existing thought, through which we can observe not only that they stand in the continuity of such texts as *La Vie Héroïque*, but that reading the two against each other exposes the underbelly of the aesthetic works. Between 1895 and 1898 de Bouhélier seems, like Céard over a longer period, to shift towards nationalism and overtly reactionary thought, his Dreyfusism borne entirely from a personal reverence for Zola, in the same way that Céard's disillusionment with the same man appears to fuel much of his own anti-Dreyfusism. Naturism retains its hyperbolic reverence for man, but by 1898 the man in question is only the one of genius, not the common individual, and the latter is relocated into a dangerous horde who, de Bouhélier argues, should know their place – and have it catered to by the government. This position is not a matter of polemical expediency for the young author, as the *Revue Naturiste*'s 'Enquête sur le féminisme' makes clear. The early importance of simple folk and women to the naturist aesthetic is revealed to be restrictive and prejudiced by de Bouhélier's later, more political writing.

[426] ibid., p.28.

A case such as de Bouhélier's is able to demonstrate, in a way his better-known elders cannot, the contradictions of choice in the Dreyfus Affair. Confronted with the necessity to differentiate oneself from the established models in both literature and politics, and falling at a moment in literary history before the modernist crisis that would open new avenues of thought for his immediate successors, de Bouhélier turned to an eclectic blend of avant-gardism and reaction with Zola somewhere near its centre. Along with the attack-minded Le Blond, the two carved out an engaged yet aestheticized vision of poetry that appealed to a swath of their contemporaries. Yet the social pressure to demonstrate naturism in action through his own verse led de Bouhélier to the flop of *Eglé ou les Concerts Champêtres*, which featured alexandrins such as "Les raisins sont gonflés pour la vie éternelle!" ('L'Attente des Fruits').[427] Gustave Kahn in *La Revue Blanche* dismissed the collection as inducing "la fatigue de tant de vers ballottant les mêmes menues et grêles idées".[428]

It is beyond our purpose, and would serve it little in a direct sense, to answer the question of whether naturism's fall was necessary or contingent - in other words, whether it died as a movement because its chief advocate was more at home writing aesthetic treatises than producing verse, or because its fundamental principles of a return to nature and celebrating the common man themselves had too little currency. The fondness with which an Apollinaire would later reflect on his naturist years suggests that the former may be closer to the truth.

In the context of the Affair, however, it is clear that the core principles of the movement were alone able to permit the squaring of a reactionary Dreyfusard circle. The hallmarks of

[427] Cited in Day, *Saint-Georges de Bouhélier's* Naturisme, p.102.
[428] ibid., p.115.

emerging integral nationalist thought found themselves redeployed on the Dreyfusard side under de Bouhélier's pen, and in the process altered the aesthetic principles from which they had been taken. It is particularly remarkable that the hardening observable in de Bouhélier's view of society occurred while championing a cause more commonly associated with equal rights, critical thought and anti-racism.

The apparently universal principles defended by Zola in both his literary thought and political engagement were able to give rise to particularist offspring such as naturism. While its impact was short-lived, it offers us an invaluable picture of the endless complications faced by individual actors in the Affair, few of whom could rely on Zola or Brunetière's longstanding dogmatism to plot a path through the crisis (and even in their cases, as has been seen, those paths were serpentine at times). The pervasiveness of both the nascent nationalism and search for spiritual fulfilment that characterized the French fin-de-siècle intellectual world find their reflections in naturist thought, resulting in the alternately bucolic and chauvinistic poetics discussed above. The Dreyfus Affair may have been a matter of principle for most of its protagonists, but which principle in particular was often in doubt.

Conclusion

The Dreyfus Affair continues to attract interest from scholars, students and the wider public because it combines a narrative that resembles a spy thriller with some of the most serious themes confronting nations and individuals in the modern West. In other words, its appeal is based on a meeting of aesthetics and politics: 'plot' and ideologies conjoined to force the French to choose a side, sometimes through tortuous mental mazes.

Each in their own way, the four *littérateurs* studied here reflect that marriage of aesthetic and political concerns, but they do so as professionals, as people who had spent years or decades considering what literature should be, how it should reflect and affect society, and what their own political positioning involved. As a result, the aesthetic and political spheres are not simply spliced together in their thought as they were for a *petit bourgeois* reading the newspaper. Instead, they entered into a dialectical relationship, in which concepts that had only previously been applied to literature found repurposing in the political commentary of the crisis, while also being revealed to have possessed latent political dimensions all along.

The end result of this dialectic was the notion of the public intellectual that survives across the world today, and still has special significance in France despite premature pronouncements of its demise since the 1980s (notably by Bourdieu, who attempted to replace Sartre's 'intellectuel total' with the concept of the 'intellectuel collectif'). Zola's advocacy of Dreyfus, and Brunetière's critiques of his engagement, together helped to define what the rights, responsibilities and possibilities were for the *intellectuel*, as that word went from being an adjective to a noun.

But, as the preceding chapters have shown, the crisis was bringing to the fore inchoate political dimensions to literary thought that had been gestating at least since the beginning of the Third Republic. When Brunetière criticized Zola's characters, for instance, it was certainly an aesthetic critique, with a genuine dismay at their perceived two-dimensionality and mechanistic traits evident in the critic's writing. But it was also a political attack; Brunetière's commitment to a conservative vision of the Republic meant that he saw divisiveness in Zola's project of representing society at every echelon, and in their specificities. In response to this naturalism of division, Brunetière instead championed Alphonse Daudet's work, seeing (not without some reservations) in it another kind of naturalism that could bring the French together through their reading and strengthen the bonds of national identity.

This same concern was apparent in the writings of Saint-Georges de Bouhélier. Son of a prominent politician *and* literary scholar in Edmond Lepelletier, Bouhélier professed an admiration for Zola and used it to guide both his poetic theory and his engagement in the Dreyfus Affair. But the more fundamental aesthetic-political layer in his work comes from his vision of festival as a locus for identity, in which poetry could take flesh and serve as a communion text for France. To return to Bouhélier's involvement in Jaurès' 1924 Pantheon ceremony, evoked in the Introduction, one can see that it was a logical outcome given his aesthetic commitments of almost thirty years before. But the interwar period, and the Second World War that would occupy the last years of Bouhélier's life, made a mockery of his vision of the national unity that such ceremonies should provide.

Henry Céard's blend of aesthetics and politics sets him apart from the other writers considered here. Rather than combining them in a vision of the nation, he used them to assail Zola, his former friend. He did so by reducing Zola to a character in the drama of the Affair,

rather than an author, but also by turning the spotlight to hermeneutics. Céard, more than Zola, Brunetière or Bouhélier, understood that at the heart of the Dreyfus Affair was a problem of textual interpretation. After all, the beginning of the scandal had been a secret document of unknown authorship, and other documents of various genres and by various authors continued to sit at its heart. In keeping with this insight, Céard marshalled his extensive knowledge of literary history and technique in the service of the anti-Dreyfusard cause. In the process, he also gave us a glimpse into the world of the middle-ranking journalist, reliant for his authority on connections to bigger names and ideas - and more closely attuned to his readership.

Zola's reputation survived Céard's attacks with hardly a scratch, of course. But his own political efficacy was ended by the flight to England that, for many critics and historians, marks the end of their own commentary on his engagement in the Affair. Yet, as discussed in Chapter 1, that flight comes barely after the halfway point of his writing about the crisis. As he moved further to the political periphery, the aesthetic content of his articles changed markedly, pushing him into the pamphleteer's position of enunciation analyzed by Marc Angenot in his study *La Parole Pamphlétaire*, with its "vision crépusculaire du monde". This move reminds us that the Affair was not experienced by many Dreyfusards as a victory; Dreyfus was only initially set free by a political manoeuvre, and further horse-trading drove a wedge between those within and without the political system. In the context of Zola's career, it also served to further 'radicalize' his turn towards the novel of ideas. A lexicographical analysis of his late novels underlines how sharply different they are from the *Rougon-Macquart* period, and how much of that difference revolves around the vastly increased presence of ideological content.

The divisions apparent in these four writers simmered, even as they shifted, through past the end of the Vichy regime and at least into the early 1960s: for instance, the presence of

Maurice Papon as Paris police prefect, and his involvement in the massacre of FLN sympathizers on the 17th of October, 1961, illustrates that intransigent nationalism continued to play a role in the machinery of the French state long after it had found its voice in the Dreyfus Affair. To what extent is Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National, now headed by his daughter Marine, a descendant of the more extreme anti-Dreyfusards? Answering that question would take us far beyond the scope of this study, and more squarely into the realm of political science: for one thing, the literary associations so prominent in 1890s anti-Dreyfusism (not only with Brunetière and Céard but Lemaitre, Barrès and Maurras) are long gone from the contemporary French far right. Aesthetics seems to have forsaken politics on this side of the spectrum.

Zola's inheritors have maintained the link far more closely. In the figure of Sartre, most clearly, one can see a self-conscious attempt to impact a crisis - the Algerian War of Independence - in the same way that Zola had the Dreyfus Affair. Sartre's methods were similar, with polemical writings to the fore that attempted to circumvent the broad collusion of the political system to raise consciousness among the electorate. The consequences of these methods were also reminiscent of the Affair; where Zola had faced innumerable death threats, and may have been killed by a nationalist roofing contractor, Sartre survived two bombing attempts by the Organisation Armée Secrète, the military partisans of "l'Algérie française" who also attempted to kill de Gaulle.

Moreover, the broader strategy for mobilization of anti-war intellectuals over Algeria echoed that found in the Dreyfus Affair. This is most striking in the 'Manifeste des 121' of 1960 (or, to give it its published title, 'Déclaration sur le droit à l'insoumission dans la guerre d'Algérie'), a declaration signed by the titular 121 artists and thinkers protesting torture in Algeria and affirming the right of French citizens to refuse participation in the conflict. The

document harks back to the 'Protestations des Intellectuels' published in *L'Aurore* in 1898, in the wake of 'J'Accuse...!'. In both crises, the solo engagement of the intellectuals' most famous figure was backed up by a textual show of collective purpose, with the signatories pooling their intellectual capital through the act of signing. And, in both crises, the army was the object of protest; its abuse of Dreyfus' personal legal rights was born again in the human rights abuses inflicted on the Algerian people.

None of the above points are clearly aesthetic. Yet a closer inspection reveals further kinship along aesthetic lines. In the 'Manifeste des 121', the peroration that introduces the final three principles of the text asserts that the signatories "considér[ent] qu'eux-mêmes, à leur place et selon leurs moyens, ont le devoir d'intervenir, non pas pour donner des conseils aux **hommes qui ont à se décider personnellement face à des problèmes aussi graves**, mais pour demander à ceux qui les jugent de ne pas se laisser prendre à l'équivoque des mots et des valeurs..." [emphasis mine]

This reference to personal choice seems a clear allusion to Sartre's existentialist philosophy, which rested on just that concept of radical individual freedom of choice. Although Maurice Blanchot was the drafter of the document, not Sartre, the latter was a signatory and, as mentioned, the best-known and most vocal of them, and the reference to choice inserts his ideas into the text. Existentialism's broader assertion of intentionality (as the term is understood by analytic philosophy: that is, the 'aboutness' of mental contents, how the human mind's ideas relate to the external world) as the foundation of not just knowledge but also metaphysics means that the political choice addressed in the 'Manifeste des 121' can be viewed as informed by the younger Sartre's aesthetic writings and literary production, notably in a work such as *La Nausée.* On existentialism, political choice is merely one variety of the human imperative to choose, and

the central role of aesthetics in Sartre's thought means that the traditionally subordinate role granted it when it is placed alongside politics must again be called into question.

To go further along this path would be to enter a new area of study entirely, and a conclusion is not the place to do so. But the structural analogies outlined above between Dreyfus and Algeria underline that the aesthetic-political dialectic, evident in the four intellectual micro-histories that are this study's chapters, is not specific to the Dreyfus Affair. In other crises too (and comparative work that embraces other intellectual traditions, national and transnational histories can doubtless supply important variations on the theme), thinkers have used originally aesthetic ideas to elaborate political stances, particularly when those stances fell outside simple party-line orientations. Without the specific features of his naturist poetics, Saint-Georges de Bouhélier would have had to be a silent Dreyfusard.

The Dreyfus Affair, then, is not 'only' a source of examples for those seeking to understand the frailties of democracy and the relationships between fields such as human rights, ethnic and religious tensions, national identity and political realignments. It also challenges the traditional view of aesthetics as an emanation of politics, as a domain of thought that emerges from more socially 'central' relations, that reflects more than it transmits. Whether immortal like Zola or forgotten like Céard, these four authors all exemplify the power of aesthetics to rewrite political ideas and political affiliations, and in the process to change history.

Table I: Science, Truth and Justice in Zola's Polemics

Work	**Uses of 'vérité'**	**Uses of 'science'**	**Uses of 'justice'**
Le Roman Expérimental	171	189	14
La Vérité en Marche	171	8	171

Table II: 'Science' in Zola's late works

Work	**Written**	**Uses of 'science'[429]**	**Word count**	**Frequency (x10,000)**
Lourdes	1893	41	187277	21.89
Rome	1895	67	252627	26.52
Paris	1897	74	192494	38.44
La Vérité en Marche	1897-1900	8	44130	18.13
Fécondité	1899	11	238748	4.61
Travail	1900	32	214642	14.91
Vérité	1902	28	240659	11.63

[429] Included under this rubric are the words 'science', 'sciences', 'scientifique', 'scientifiques', and 'scientifiquement'. It could be argued that other related terms such as 'savant' merit inclusion, but this runs the risk of overdiversifying the semantic field: the five words above provide a clear and consistent set of references on which to work.

Table III: 'Vérité' in Zola's novels, 1876-1882 and 1894-1902

Work	**Written**	**Uses of 'vérité'**	**Word count**	**Frequency x 10E5**
L'Assommoir	1876	0	170273	0
Une Page d'Amour	1877	0	109964	0
Nana	1879	0	151849	0
Pot-Bouille	1881	1	145562	0.687
Lourdes	1893	14	187277	7.48
Rome	1895	61	252627	24.15
Paris	1897	67	192494	34.81
Fécondité	1898	17	238748	7.12
Travail	1900	65	214642	30.28
Vérité	1902	200	240659	83.11

Table IV: 'Justice' in Zola's novels, 1876-1882 and 1894-1902

Work	**Written**	**Uses of 'justice'**	**Word count**	**Frequency x10E5**
L'Assommoir	1876	1	170273	0.59
Une Page d'Amour	1877	1	109964	0.91
Nana	1879	2	151849	1.32
Pot-Bouille	1881	1	145562	0.69
Lourdes	1893	15	187277	8.01
Rome	1895	54	252627	21.38
Paris	1897	100	192494	51.95
Fécondité	1899	14	238748	5.86
Travail	1900	106	214642	49.38
Vérité	1902	135	240659	56.10

Works Cited

Primary texts

Books

Maurice Barrès, *Scènes et Doctrines du Naturalisme*. Paris: Plon, 1925.

Maurice le Blond, *Essai sur le Naturisme.* Paris: Editions du Mercure de France, 1896.

Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, *Choix de Pages*. Arthur Herbert, 1907.
---. *Les Eléments d'une Renaissance Française.* Paris: Bibliothèque Artistique et Littéraire, 1899.
---. *Le Printemps d'une Génération.* Paris: Nagel,1946.
---. *La Révolution en Marche*. Paris: Stock, 1898.
---. *La Vie Héroïque des Aventuriers, des Poètes, des Rois, et des Artisans.* Paris: L. Vanier, 1895.

Ferdinand Brunetière, *Discours de Combat,* v.1. Paris: Perrin, 1900.
---. *Etudes Critiques sur l'Histoire de la Littérature Française,* v.1, v.5. Paris: Hachette, 1916.
---. *Honoré de Balzac.* Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1906.
---. *Manuel de l'Histoire de la Littérature Française*. Paris: Delagrave, 1899.
---. *Questions Actuelles.* Paris: Perrin, 1907.
---. *Le Roman Naturaliste.* Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1896.

Alphonse Daudet, *L'Evangéliste.* Paris: Lemerre, 1888.

Emile Duclaux, *Avant le Procès*. Paris: Stock, 1898.

Anatole France, *La Vie Littéraire*, v.1. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1921.

Jules Lemaitre, *Morceaux choisis de Jules Lemaitre*. Paris: Ginn, 1896.

Le Procès Zola, Compte Rendu Sténographique "In-Extenso", v.1. Paris: Stock, 1898.

Emile Zola, *Une Campagne*. Paris: Charpentier, 1888.
---. *Correspondance,* vols. VII and IX. Ed. B.H. Bakker. Montreal: Presses Universitaires de Montreal/ Eds. du CNRS, 1989.
---. *Ecrits sur le Roman*. Ed. Henri Mitterand. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2004.
---. *Fécondité.* Paris: Fasquelle, 1899.
---. *Nouvelle Campagne.* Paris: Fasquelle, 1896.
---. *Œuvres Complètes* v. 22. Ed. Maurice le Blond. Paris: Bernouard, 1928.
---. *Œuvres Complètes* v. VII. Ed. Henri Mitterand. Paris: Cercle du Livre Précieux, 1966.
---. *Paris.* Paris: Fasquelle, 1898.
---. *Le Roman Expérimental.* Paris: Charpentier, 1880.
---. *Les Rougon-Macquart* v.I. Eds. Armand Lanoux and Henri Mitterand. Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléïade, 1967.

---. *Travail.* Paris: Fasquelle, 1901.
---. *Vérité.* Paris: Fasquelle, 1903.
---. *La Vérité en Marche*. Paris: Charpentier, 1901.

Articles

Paul Adam, 'Critique du Socialisme et de l'Anarchie'. *La Revue Blanche* 4 no.19 (May 1893). 370-7.

Ferdinand Brunetière, 'Après le Procès'. *La Revue des Deux Mondes* 4 no.146 (Mar. 15, 1898). 428-447.
---. 'La France Juive'. *La Revue des Deux Mondes* 3 no.75 (Jun. 1, 1886). 693-705.
---. 'Paris'. *La Revue des Deux Mondes* 4 no.146 (Apr. 15, 1898). 922-935.
---. 'Les Petits Naturalistes'. *La Revue des Deux Mondes* 3 no.64 (Aug. 1, 1884). 693-705.
---. 'A Propos du *Disciple'*. *La Revue des Deux Mondes* 3 no.94 (Jul. 1, 1889). 214-227.

Henry Céard, *Une Belle Journée*. Paris: Charpentier, 1881.
---. 'Après le Procès'. *Le Gaulois*, Feb. 25, 1898.
---. 'A Bas la France'. *Le National* (Paris), Feb. 10, 1898.
---. 'Etres Obtus'. *L'Evénement* (Paris), Feb. 26, 1898.
---. 'Lettre à Zola'. *L'Evénement*, Feb. 12, 1898.
---. 'Némésis'. *L'Evénement*, Sep. 16, 1899.
---. 'Nouvel Oedipe'. *Le National*, Jun. 2, 1898.
---. 'Oedipe Moderne'. *L'Evénement*, Jan. 27, 1900.
---. 'La Patrie Française'. *L'Evénement*, Jan. 7, 1899.
---. 'La Ville d'Alceste'. *L'Evénement*, Jan. 15, 1898.
---. 'Virtuosité Littéraire'. *Le National*, Dec. 16, 1897.

Joachim Gasquet, 'Notes pour Servir à l'Histoire du Naturisme'. *La Plume* no. 205 (Nov. 1, 1897). 672-4.

Secondary texts

Books

Walter L. Adamson, *Embattled Avant-Gardes: Modernism's Resistance to Commodity Culture in Europe.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: U. of California Press, 2007.

Marc Angenot, *La Parole Pamphlétaire. Contribution à la Typologie des Discours Modernes*. Paris: Payot, 1982.

Guillaume Apollinaire, *Œuvres Complètes* v. 3. Ed. Michel Décaudin. Paris: Balland and Lecat, 1966.

Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*. Ed. George Kennedy. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991.

David Baguley, *Naturalist Fiction: the Entropic Vision.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.

Louis Begley, *Why the Dreyfus Affair Matters*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2009.

R.J. Berg, *La Querelle des Critiques en France à la Fin du XIXème Siècle.* New York: Peter Lang, 1990.

Ernst Bloch et al., *Aesthetics and Politics*. London: Verso, 1990.

Willard Bohn, *Apollinaire and the International Avant-Garde*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1997.

Louis Joseph Bondy, *Le Classicisme de Ferdinand Brunetière.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1930.

Anne Boquel and Etienne Kern, *Une Histoire des Haines d'Ecrivains*. Paris: Flammarion, 2009.

Léon Bloy, *Je m'Accuse*. Paris: Editions de la 'Maison d'Art', 1900.

Frederick Brown, *For the Soul of France*. New York: Knopf, 2010.

C.A. Burns, *Henry Céard et le Naturalisme*. Birmingham: Goodman and Sons, 1982.

Michael Burns, *The Dreyfus Affair: a Documentary History*. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999.

Eric Cahm, *L'Affaire Dreyfus: Histoire, Politique et Société*. Paris: Livre de Poche, 1994.

Henriette Cavaignac Dardenne, *Lumières sur l'Affaire Dreyfus*. Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1964.

Christophe Charle, *La Naissance des 'Intellectuels', 1880-1900*. Paris: Minuit, 1990.

D.G. Charlton, *France: A Companion to French Studies.* London: Taylor and Francis, 1972.

Rene-Pierre Colin, *Schopenhauer en France: Un Mythe Naturaliste*. Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1979.
---. *Zola, Renégats et Alliés: La République Naturaliste*. Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1988.

Antoine Compagnon, *Connaissez-Vous Brunetière?* Paris: Seuil, 1997.

Venita Datta, *Heroes and Legends of Fin-de-Siècle France.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011.
---. *Birth of a National Icon: the Literary Avant-Garde and the Origins of the Intellectual in France*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1999.

Patrick L. Day, *Saint-Georges de Bouhélier's* Naturisme: *an Anti-Symbolist Movement in Late Nineteenth-Century French Poetry*. New York: Peter Lang, 2001.

Michel Décaudin, *La Crise des valeurs symbolistes*. Geneva: Slatkine, 1981.

Ton van der Eyden, *Public Management of Society*. Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2003.

Christopher Forth, *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2004.

Ruth Harris, *Dreyfus: Politics, Emotion and the Scandal of the Century*. New York: Metropolitan, 2010.

Miranda B. Hickman and John D. McIntyre (eds.), *Rereading the New Criticism*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2012.

Mark Jancovich, *The Cultural Politics of the New Criticism.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.

Paul Léautaud, *Journal Littéraire*, v.1. Paris: Mercure de France, 1986.

Jules Lemaître, *Morceaux choisis de Jules Lemaître*. Ed. Rosine Melée. Boston: Ginn & co., 1896.

Jean-Philippe Mathy, *Melancholy Politics*. University Park: Penn State Press, 2011.

Peter Middleton, *Distant Reading: Performance, Readership, and Consumption in Contemporary Poetry*. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2005.

Henri Mitterand, *Zola* vols. II and III. Paris: Fayard, 2001-2003.

Alain Pagès, *La Bataille Littéraire*: *Essai sur la Réception du Naturalisme à l'Epoque de* Germinal. Paris: Séguier, 1989.
---. *Emile Zola, un Intellectuel dans l'Affaire Dreyfus*. Paris: Séguier, 1991.
---. *Emile Zola, de* J'Accuse *au Panthéon.* Saint Paul: Souny, 2008.

Roy Pascal, *The Dual Voice.* Manchester: Manchester UP, 1977.

Charles Péguy, *Notre Jeunesse*. Paris: Gallimard, 1933.

Marcel Proust, *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, v.2. Paris: Gallimard, 1961.

Jacques Rancière, *Politique de la Littérature*. Paris: Galilée, 2007.

Joseph Reinach, *Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus*, v.3. Paris: Eds. de la Revue Blanche, 1903.

Théodore Reinach, *Histoire Sommaire de l'Affaire Dreyfus*. Paris: Librairie G. Bellais, 1894.

Andriès de Rosa, *Saint-Georges de Bouhélier et le Naturisme.* Paris: Vanier, 1910.

Gisèle Sapiro, *La Responsabilité de l'Ecrivain*. Paris: Seuil, 2011.

Alan B. Spitzer, *Historical Truth and Lies about the Past.* Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1996.

Zeev Sternhell, *Maurice Barrès et le Nationalisme Français*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1972.

Sylvie Thorel-Cailleteau, *La Pertinence Réaliste: Zola*. Paris: Champion, 2001.

Gustave Vapereau, *Dictionnaire Universel des Littératures.* Paris: Hachette,1876.

Nicholas White, *The Family in Crisis in Late Nineteenth Century French Fiction.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.

Michel Winock, *Le Siècle des Intellectuels*. Paris: Seuil, 1998.

Julian Wright, *The Regionalist Movement in France, 1890-1914*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003.

Articles

Ursula Bähler, 'Sur les traces naturalistes de *La Vérité en marche*'. *Cahiers naturalistes* 82 (2008). 83-108.

Pierre Baudson, 'Zola et la Caricature, d'après les Recueils Céard du Musée Carnavalet'. *Les Cahiers Naturalistes*, XI, n° 29 (1965). 43-60.

Avner Ben-Amos, 'La 'panthéonisation' de Jean Jaurès'. *Terrain*, no. 15 - *Paraître en public* (October 1990), [Web], uploaded 07/09/07. URL : http://terrain.revues.org/2983

Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, 'Surface Reading: an Introduction'. *Representations* 108 No.1 (Fall 2009). 1-21.

Roger Chartier, 'Espace social et imaginaire social: les intellectuels frustrés au XVIIe siècle'. Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales, 37e Année, No. 2 (Mar - Apr, 1982). 389-400.

Jane Gallop, 'The Ethics of Close Reading: Close Encounters.' *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 16.3 (Fall 2000). 7-17.

Steven R. Hause, 'Anti-Protestant Rhetoric in the Early Third Republic. *French Historical Studies* 16:1 (Spring, 1989). 183-201.

Jacqueline Lalouette, 'La querelle de la foi et de la science et le banquet Berthelot'. *Revue Historique*, 300/4, 608 (1998). 825-43.

Alain Pagès, 'La Rhétorique de *J'Accuse*', [Web] Uploaded 11/15/07. URL: http://www.item.ens.fr/index.php?id=187352

Harry Paul, 'The Debate over the Bankruptcy of Science in 1895'. *French Historical Studies* 5:3 (Spring 1968. 299-327.

Pierre-Antoine Perrod, 'Nouveaux documents sur l'affaire Peytel : la genèse d'une erreur judiciaire'. *L'Année Balzacienne*, 1982 n° 3. 7-30.

Anne Rasmussen, 'Critique du progrès, « crise de la science » : débats et représentations du tournant du siècle'. *Mil neuf cent*, N°14, 1996. 89-113.

Jean-Marie Seillan, 'Huysmans, un antisémite fin-de-siècle'. *Romantisme*, 1997 no.95. 113-126.

Michel Winock, 'Les Affaires Dreyfus'. *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, No. 5, Special Edition: Les guerres Franco-Françaises (Jan. - Mar., 1985). 19-37.

Films

The Life of Emile Zola. Dir. William Dieterle. Perf. Paul Muni. Warner Home Video, 2005. DVD.